



## YEMEN: YANKEE GO HOME!

**O**n July The people of Yemen today are waging an unwavering battle for democracy and independence. Their struggle is one of many being carried out by the people of the Middle East and North Africa against the undemocratic rulers of the region and their colonial masters in Washington and elsewhere.

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**CECILIA POINT**

Cecilia explains, "They are trying to sidestep the most important issue which is protection of all First Nations..."



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*We are realists... We dream the impossible - che*



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## SYRIA: IS THERE A REVOLUTION OR COUNTER-REVOLUTION?

**R**ight now Syria is under a rapidly escalating struggle, not between rebels and the Syrian government as is touted in the media every day, but between imperialist backed forces and an independent government and country that is resisting to be over-



thrown by the hand of imperialism. Right now Syria is in a full on state of war, but not just in a regular civil war between two opposing sides. This is a civil war where...



**F**riday August 10, 2012 marked 100 days of occupation and protest to defend c̄osna?em (also known as Marpole Midden) in Vancouver, British Columbia...

# YEMEN: YANKEE GO HOME! STRUGGLE AGAINST IMPERIALIST DOMINATION

*By Nita Palmer*

The people of Yemen today are waging an unwavering battle for democracy and independence. Their struggle is one of many being carried out by the people of the Middle East and North Africa against the undemocratic rulers of the region and their colonial masters in Washington and elsewhere.

The protests in Yemen began in January 2011, inspired by the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt. Tens of thousands of people marched in the streets, demanding the government address issues of unemployment, poverty and corruption. These demands for democracy and social justice were soon followed by demands for the resignation of



*Anti-Saleh protest, on March 19, 2011*

Yemen's president, Ali Abdullah Saleh. Protests escalated throughout January and February 2011. On March 18, 2011, a march in the capital city of Sana'a saw Yemeni security forces open fire on demonstrators, killing 52 people. However, the crackdown only served to steel the protester's resolve, and also sparked the defection of a number of high ranking officers and ministers from the military and government.

Negotiations began for Saleh to leave office, brokered by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Many of its members, Saudi Arabia most prominent among them, were concerned that protests would escalate if Saleh did not leave office, potentially threatening to spill over Yemen's borders into their own countries. However, Saleh did not leave the country until June 2011, after he was injured in an attempted assassination. In November 2011, he officially transferred power to his Vice President, Abd al-Rab Mansur al-Hadi, in exchange for immunity from prosecution. Although the official opposition council accepted this deal, many protesters were angered that Saleh would not face justice and that essentially the same government would continue with a new face.

Presidential elections were held on February 21, 2012, in which al-Hadi was the sole candidate. Not surprisingly,

he won. Despite this absolute farce and mockery of democracy, the elections were hailed as a success by the United States administration and many of their allies in the Persian Gulf. In an official statement on the elections, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said "on behalf of the United States, I want to congratulate the people of Yemen on today's successful presidential election. This is another important step forward in their democratic transition process and continues the important work of political and constitutional reform... Today's election sends a clear message that the people of Yemen are looking forward to a brighter democratic future."

Although many in Yemen celebrated the departure of Saleh, it is clear that little will change under al-Hadi's rule, despite his promises to address conditions of poverty and unemployment. Every Friday, tens of thousands have been gathering in cities across Yemen to demand the removal of Saleh's relatives and allies from key military and security positions and an end to interference in Yemen by the US and Saudi Arabia.

## **Social and Economic Roots of the Protests**

The Romans called the area which is today Yemen "Arabia Felix", or Happy Arabia for its lush land and fertile soil which supported thriving communities within a mostly dry and barren desert landscape. However, despite the country's plentiful resources, the people of Yemen today do not live in the fortunate circumstances the



Romans once coveted. Yemen is the poorest country in the Arab world, ranking 154th out of 187 countries on the UN's Human Development Index. Although its major cities like Sana'a and Aden look thriving and modern from an outside view, the reality is that most of the country's citizens are struggling to survive. Forty-two percent of the population lives on less than \$2 a day, according to the United Nations Development Programme, and over half of the population is chronically malnourished. The depth of the problem is revealed jarringly with horrifying images of skin-and-bone children from across the country. UNICEF reports that over a million of Yemeni children are severely malnourished, resulting in stunted growth and chronic health problems. This number of starving children is second only to Afghanistan.

Yemen also faces the challenges of low levels of development. Over half of the population has no access to an

35%, according to the World Bank. However, the Yemen Education for Employment Foundation estimates that unemployment rates among Yemeni youth are around 50%. Even many university graduates cannot find jobs. As in many other Arab countries, this frustrated and dissatisfied youth population has been a driving force in protests against the government.

Desperate social conditions, together with widespread government corruption and mass killings of activists have led to the uprising in Yemen today. Although

there are a number of different groups and factions among the pro-



improved water source such as a well, instead getting their water from often-contaminated rivers, lakes and streams. More than three quarters of the population do not have access to even such basic improved sanitation facilities such as an outhouse, resulting in outbreaks of cholera and other diseases.

The already desperate living conditions in Yemen have been recently exacerbated by a skyrocketing unemployment rate, pushing hundreds of thousands more people into poverty. Overall unemployment in Yemen sits at about



Protests in Sanaa, Yemen on March 11, 2011

testers, the demands for democracy, social reform and independence from foreign interference are common to all.

#### Colonial Past

The issue of foreign interference in Ye-

men's affairs is not a new one. Ishaan Tharoor writes in Time Magazine, "by the 19th century, Yemen's modern political contours were taking shape with the region a chess piece in the hands of foreign powers. The Ottoman Empire extended its control over Arabia south from the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, seizing Sana'a and nearby towns. In 1832, soldiers of the British East India Company captured Aden, which they saw as a strategic waypoint between Europe and their

colonial possessions in India."

The southern port of Aden and its surrounding area were ruled directly by the British East India Company until 1937, when Britain made the port a crown colony. Yemen remained under British control until 1967, when an uprising against their rule forced them to leave. However, the colonial powers were not going to give Yemen up so easily. Today, the port of Aden remains a critical shipping and trading point between the Horn of Africa and major markets in India and East Asia - and an

area of strategic and economic interest to the United States.

#### The Secret US War in Yemen

It is of critical importance to the U.S. government and capitalist

class to maintain allies in the Middle East, an area rich in resources and the site of many important trade routes. Yemen, like many other countries, has fallen victim to a no-win scenario presented by the US administration. The choice presented to them was to ally themselves with the US, allowing

the plundering of resources by US-based corporations direct or

indirect interference in their country's affairs, or stand up to Washington and face the constant threat of becoming the next Iraq or Afghanistan. The Yemeni government chose the former option.

However, despite their government's capitulation, Yemenis have not escaped the bombs and terror brought by the United States. With the cooperation of the Yemeni government, the CIA has been carrying out a covert "drone

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*continued from page 3*

war" in Yemen, supposedly carrying out attacks in the name of killing al-Qaeda militants. Washington-based think tank the New America Foundation estimates that between 531 and 779 Yemenis have been killed in drone strikes.

In a June 12 report, CNN National Security Analyst Peter Bergen wrote, "on April 25, the White House approved a new policy inaugurating a more aggressive campaign of drone strikes in Yemen allowing so-called "signature" strikes. These are strikes on individuals whose patterns of behavior signal the presumed presence of an important militant or of a plot against the

United States, even if the targeted individual's identity is unknown."

The CIA and the US administration claim they are making "every effort" to avoid civilian casualties. How

is this possible when a person can now be charged, tried, and executed based merely on their behaviour by someone sitting in a control room in a foreign country?? What the US is doing in reality is waging a campaign of terror and fear against the civilian population in Yemen to send the message: "if you defy us, this is what we will do to you".

As for their claims of supporting the Yemeni people in their call for Saleh to

resign, this was simply another strategic and opportunistic move. The US administration backed the resignation of their ally, Saleh, because they did not want to give more fuel to the opposition and risk a full-fledged uprising which could see a truly independent and democratic government in Yemen which would not capitulate to US interests.

### **Hands Off Yemen!**

The Yemeni people have been waging a courageous battle for their human rights, democracy and independence.



*Protests in Taiz, Yemen in April 2011*

As people living in Canada, the United States, and around the world, we must support them in their calls for democracy and independence by demanding an end to the ongoing drone war and US interference in the country. The victory of the Yemeni people in their struggle would not only mean defeat for the US, but a victory for people all around the Middle East and the entire world who are struggling for their democratic and human rights.

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### **Battle of Ideas Press**

#### **WAR & OCCUPATION IN AFGHANISTAN WHICH WAY FORWARD?**

**BY NITA PALMER**

*"The problem of Afghanistan boils down to just two words: foreign occupation. The Canada/US/NATO occupation forces claim that corruption, poverty, drug production, the presence of the Taliban and other social or political crises are the fundamental problems of Afghanistan which they must fix. The irony of this claim is that the same occupation forces have proven themselves completely incapable of fixing these problems or of bettering the lives of Afghan people"*

Nita Palmer is an author and researcher on the war in Afghanistan.

She is a member of the editorial board of Vancouver, Canada-based social justice newspaper *Fire This Time*.

**WAR AND OCCUPATION IN AFGHANISTAN WHICH WAY FORWARD?**

**NITA PALMER**



**NITA PALMER**

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# Protest and March Marks 100 Days of Protest for Musqueam Nation



*Musqueam Nation and supporters mark 100 days of protest in Vancouver, BC on August 10, 2012*

By Tamara Hansen  
& Aaron Mercredi

**F**riday August 10, 2012 marked 100 days of occupation and protest to defend cəsnaʔəm (also known as Marpole Midden) in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. The Musqueam First Nation has been standing watch over cəsnaʔəm, an ancient village and burial site, next to the Arthur Laing Bridge in Vancouver as it is technically owned by a private company, "Century Holdings", which has slated the land for condo construction. These plans for construction seem to contradict the fact that not only do the Musqueam have 4,000 years of history with that land, but also the company already uncovered the remains of two adults and three infants which was to be expected as cəsnaʔəm (or Marpole Midden) is a recognized "National Heritage Site". According to the Parks Canada website, [www.historicplaces.ca](http://www.historicplaces.ca), "Marpole Midden was designated a National Historic Site of Canada in 1933 because - it is the site of one of the largest pre-contact middens on the Pacific coast of Canada."

Over 300 people gathered outside of the Safeway at Granville and 70th on the morning of August 10 to show their support for the Musqueam people and cəsnaʔəm. With the Musqueam banner at the front along with drummers, sing-

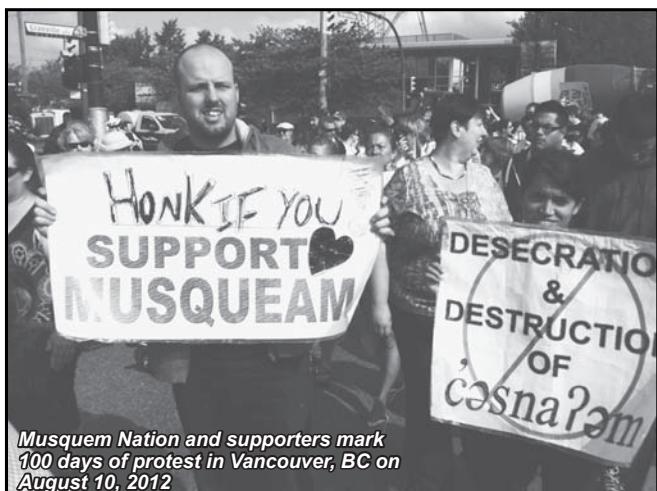
ers and families, the march began down Granville. Looking through the march you could see signs reading, "Serbia supports Musqueam", "Archeologists support Musqueam", "BC Nurses Union supports Musqueam", and "Honk if you support Musqueam". These also came along with people from many different Indigenous nations from across Canada, who held their own signs, banners and flags showing their nations' support for the Musqueam. The march took over an hour and a half to reach cəsnaʔəm, pausing at intersections with organizers handing out information to cars passing by on their morning commutes.

When the march arrived at cəsnaʔəm there were speakers from the Provincial New Democratic Party (NDP), BC Nurses' Union (BCNU), Vancouver's Coalition of Progressive Electors (COPE), along with Musqueam elders and organizers. Cecilia Point, a spokeswoman for the Musqueam First Nation, then announced that they had collected over 3,000 signatures in support of protecting cəsnaʔəm and that they had organized a relay run from the site to BC Premier Christy Clark's office to deliver the petition. Runners, both Musqueam and supporters, warmed up for

their run while a second group prepared to drive to the offices of the private developer, "Century Holdings", to deliver copies of the petition. It was a beautiful and powerful display of community support and involvement as the runners and vehicles left with the petitions.

The songs, drumming and words spoken throughout the event were also beautiful and powerful. Many speakers pointed out some deep and evident contradictions in the government's negotiations with the Musqueam. For example, there are laws protecting 100-year-old heritage homes and buildings in the area, and yet the City and Province are not interested in protecting a 4,000-year-old heritage site. The other question asked was about the sincerity of Christy Clark's "Family First Agenda". They asked whose families is she really putting first? Don't the families and traditions of the Musqueam matter?

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*Musqueam Nation and supporters mark 100 days of protest in Vancouver, BC on August 10, 2012*

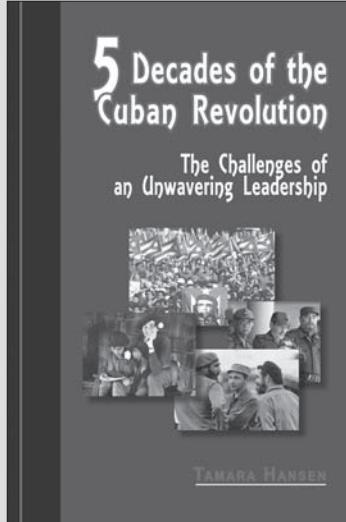
## 5 Decades of the Cuban Revolution

The Challenges of an Unwavering Leadership

By Tamara Hansen

*"The battles Cuba has fought have not been easy. Some were physical battles, such as the battle against bandits in the Escambray Mountains or the Bay of Pigs invasion. However, most were not battles of physical might, but battles of ideas. But with every twist and turn, every up and down Fidel has been one of the first leaders to say, 'this way forward' or 'we made a wrong turn, we must change course.'*

Tamara Hansen is the coordinator of Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC). She is also an editorial board member of The Fire This Time newspaper. She has travelled to Cuba ten times and has written extensively on Cuban politics since 2003.



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### CORRECTIONS from Volume 7 Issue 5

We apologize for any inconvenience  
this may have caused

► On page 4 "After the Ottoman Empire was defeated in World War II," should be "...in World War I."

► The article "Pastors For Peace Caravan to Cuba Tour in BC a Huge Success" on page 7 was written by Alison Bodine, who was not credited.

► For technical reasons the emails listed in the editorial information on page 6 of the last issue are not correct. Please note the correct emails in this issue on page 6.

continued from page 5

The struggle of the Musqueam for c̄̄sna?̄m and their resolute message to continue fighting after 100 days of continuous occupation and protest is an example for Indigenous people across BC and Canada. This fight also follows in the footsteps of other great struggles, such as the occupation of the land by the Mohawk people at Oka in 1990 to defend their burial site from being uprooted to expand a 9-hole golf course into 18 holes. The Musqueam people know that they have taken on a struggle with major ramifications. A defeat would signal to the provincial and federal government that they can get away with perpetuating the injustices against Indigenous people that have continued now for centuries. A victory will be an important triumph in favor of Indigenous nations and their rights to the land and will also remind working and oppressed people, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, that when we unite anything is possible.

If you live in the Greater Vancouver Area please make sure to visit the occupation site at c̄̄sna?̄m to share your support and solidarity: 1338 SW Marine Dr, Vancouver, BC.

For more information on the struggle to defend c̄̄sna?̄m please read "c̄̄sna?̄m: Musqueam Nation Stands Up for Ancient Village" in FTT Volume 7 Issue 2 and our interview with Cecilia Point in FTT Volume 7 Issue 3 at [www.firethistime.net](http://www.firethistime.net)



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### Donations

If you find Fire This Time to be an effective tool in the struggle of oppressed people for justice, more than ever, we need your support. On top of our regular costs of production, we regularly send members of our editorial board on assignment throughout North America, the Caribbean and beyond in order to make Fire This Time a better resource. These efforts have strained our finances.

If you would like to help with a donation, please make cheques payable to "Nita Palmer".

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Volume 7 Issue 8, September 28, 2012

# "They Are Trying to Sidestep the Most Important Issue"

*An Interview with Cecilia Point,  
Spokesperson from the Musqueam Band*

*By Aaron Mercredi*

**FTT:** Given that the BC government has been saying that it is making progress with the Musqueam over the land issue and over, what was the reason for organizing the demonstration on August 10?

**Cecilia Point:** Well, they are trying to sidestep the most important issue which is protection of all First Nations burial sites. They still continue to issue site alteration permits, archaeological investigative permits on top of burial sites. The argument they give in this case is that it is private land, so they are saying that the developer followed all the rules, etc. We're saying that their hands are not tied because it is private land. They can simply move the developer somewhere else. And as you know, in the beginning, we had talked about a land swap, but when I thought about it some more, I wondered why did Musqueam have to be involved in that. British Columbia is only 6 percent privately owned. So there is so much land. If this ever happens, there is so much land in BC that is Crown land, like the rest of it is Crown land, they can just move him somewhere else when this happens. And I think a similar thing happened in Caledonia in Ontario when there was a possible grave site desecration pending. The province of Ontario, in



that case, purchased the site and then moved the developer somewhere else. So, to me, the Province doesn't want to start setting a precedent. I've heard legal people tell me they are trying to avoid the



*Cecilia Point on August 11, 2012*

'open the floodgates' rule and they are concerned that so many First Nations

will then start to step up and say,

'Well, protect ours, protect ours, protect ours,' because since I've been here, of course, I have met many First Nations who are in a similar situation or have had that happen to them already. So they are trying to sidestep a part of the Heritage Act that protects Aboriginal Title and heritage sites because they have never used it before.

**FTT:** What is the best way that people in Vancouver, across Canada, and internationally can help support the Musqueam in this

*continued on page 8*



## struggle?

**Cecilia Point:** Well, of course they can continue to come and stand with us because I think it is important to have a show of people at the site. But, they do need to petition their governments. And I say governments in plural meaning cities, provinces and federally. This site is recognized as a National Historic Site federally. And the federal government has not weighed in at all because they say that they have transferred all of the Historic Site powers to the provinces. So in this case the permits are coming from the Ministry of Forests and Lands so that is the one that we have been hammering away at the most because we want them to rescind the permits. Because the other thing they are doing, the permits were supposed to expire on June 29 or June 30. I remember our council coming down here and saying "You can probably go home because the permits are going to expire and you don't have to stay here and protect the site because they won't be allowed to dig." But then the Province renewed them and extended the dates for two more weeks and then two more weeks and then two more weeks again. But the first time they did it, Musqueam's legal team said, "Please don't do that." Like we were in the middle of negotiations to have them rescinded and they kept extending them. So as it

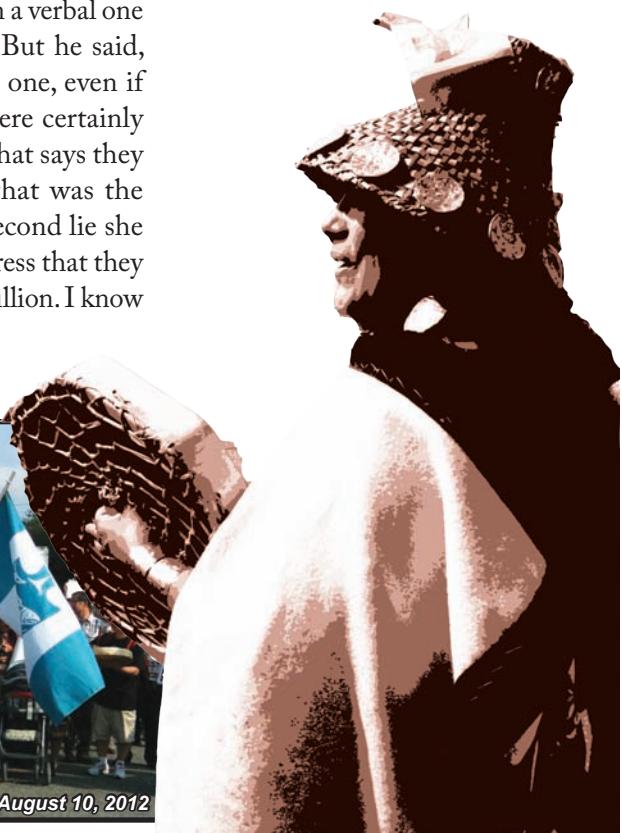
turned out, they were extending them at the request of the developer. And last week, Mary Polak (Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation), the Province, had held a press conference. I believe she held that press conference to make us look like we didn't know what was going on. In fact, she said that to us right in front of the reporters because there was a group from the community that went there. She said, "Well, why don't we have a little conversation after because I think your administration isn't giving you the whole story." She actually said that in front of the cameras. So we said, "Ok," and met with her afterwards and she didn't tell us anything else that she told the reporters there. So we just started asking her questions. We said, "Why do you keep extending these permits?" And she said, "As long as they extend them the developer promises he won't do any work. Even though he has a permit to work she says he promises he won't do any work. Our legal team again says, "There is no such agreement in place and if there is even a verbal one that doesn't hold water." But he said, "There isn't even a verbal one, even if they said that to her." There certainly is no written agreement that says they won't do any work. So that was the first lie she told us. The second lie she told us was, she told the press that they were forwarding us \$12 million. I know it's complicated, but we talked about some

other pieces of land that the Province was working with us on that they were going to transfer to us. So, nobody ever knew how much value that land was, and that was something our team was trying to keep secret because since she's now told the public how much money it's going to be the developer wants it all. As you know we're in negotiations to purchase this property. We're willing to pay for just the lots, just the dirt and this developer came to the table and asked us for covering his losses, covering his construction costs so far and covering even possible profit losses. I'm saying that that belongs to the Province. Like, if we want to buy this piece of land then we'll buy this piece of land, but that other stuff, that has nothing to do with us. The Province is the one that made that mistake, so they need to go after the Province for that money.

**FTT: Thanks a lot for taking the time to speak with us tonight.**



*Musqueam Nation and supporters mark 100 days of protest in Vancouver, BC on August 10, 2012*



# Pipeline Dollars Against Indigenous Rights

By Thomas Davies

**T**alk about lousy timing! Just as debate on Enbridge's proposed "Northern Gateway" pipeline was dominating provincial and national headlines in Canada, another of their pipelines was shut down and investigated after leaking over 1,200 barrels of oil in Wisconsin at the end of July. Enbridge executives must however be credited with creativity in their positive spin that this leak "showed improvement" compared to their many previous spills. While a recent media standoff between B.C. Premier Christy Clark and Alberta Premier Alison Redford about exactly who will reap pipeline profits may have had a few more people watching the evening news, the most fundamental issue of the rights of indigenous nations whose land the pipelines would cross has been purposely glossed over when dealing with the Northern Gateway and two other major proposed pipelines starting in Alberta.

## Pipe Dreams

The three major pipelines currently creating the most debate are:

Enbridge's 6 billion dollar "Northern Gateway" pipeline, which would operate between Edmonton and Kitimat on the coast of B.C.

KinderMorgan's 4.1 billion dollar expansion of its existing "TransMountain" pipeline, which also begins in Edmonton and terminates in the Lower Mainland and Washington State.

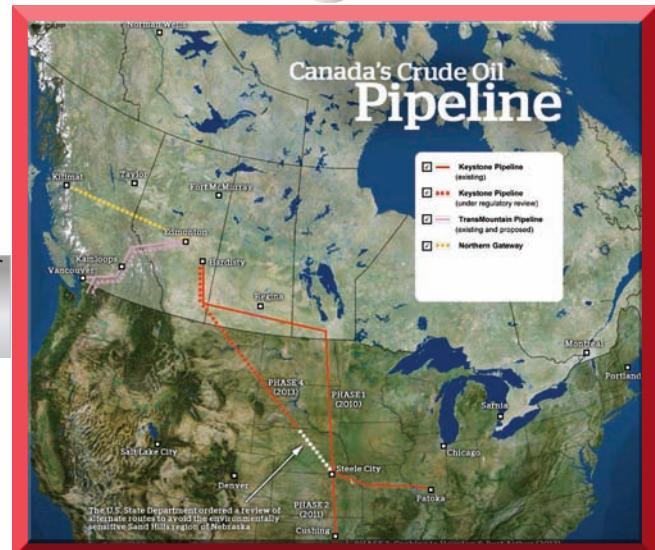
TransCanada's 7.6 billion dollar Keystone XL Pipeline, which would add to an existing pipeline to take oil to multiple destinations across the United States and all

the way down to the Gulf Coast of Texas.

It's impossible to argue that pipelines of this magnitude would not create jobs in their construction. However, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) points out that, for example, Enbridge's estimates of creating 63,000 person years of employment with Northern Gateway are misleading. "According to Enbridge's own estimates, the pipeline will only create about 1,850 construction jobs per year for three years." Of course the pipelines would generate profit for Canadian oil and companies, but while they made a net of 18.7 billion dollars in profit in 2011, anyone who has filled up with gas lately will tell you that none of this has been passed on to the consumer. So how much will the pipelines actually economically benefit most people?

## The Risks are Real

Enbridge's recent Wisconsin spill happened almost two years to the day from its



to clean. From 1999 to 2010, Enbridge had 804 spills total with 168,645 barrels spilled. This equals approximately 26.81 million litres..." Remember, Enbridge is just one typical oil company, and its pipeline isn't even the longest one proposed! The environmental risks are huge.

## Who Really Decides?

B.C. Premier Christy Clarke recently laid out 5 requirements for the B.C. government to consider supporting the pipelines, with the most discussed being that B.C. receives a "fair share" of the economic benefits. But really, who is the B.C. government to dictate something which obviously deals with the land rights of the many indigenous nations whose territory the pipeline will

cross? Recently, Canada finally officially signed on to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which states:

*1. Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands or territories and other resources*

*2. States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the Indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources, particularly in connection with the development, utilization or exploitation of mineral, water*



Anti-pipeline protest in Prince Rupert, BC on February 4, 2012

massive oil spill in the Kalamazoo River in Michigan. Enbridge's pipeline leaked an estimated 3.3 million litres of oil into the River, which cost over 800 million dollars

*continued on page 30*

# The 8th Annual Vancouver International HIP HOP 4 PEACE FESTIVAL

## PEACE! AN ELEMENT OF HIP HOP!

By Shakeel Lochan

The bringing together of the struggle of oppressed people around the world with Hip Hop, is a basis of the Annual Vancouver International Hip Hop 4 Peace Festival. Now in its 8th year the festival, organized by antiwar coalition Mobilization Against War & Occupation returns to Greater Vancouver, B.C. Canada - PEACE! An Element of Hip Hop!

The inception of Hip Hop was a voice of people facing systemic poverty and racism. Today Hip Hop is a voice of people around the world facing a new era of growing war and occupation characterized by attacks on independent nations, poor and working people by competing imperialist countries like the US, Canada, Britain and France. Through sanctions, military invasions and occupations these countries seek to expand their hegemony. These attacks exist abroad and at home through increasing poverty, theft of land and resources, unemployment, rising tuition costs and drastic cuts to social programs.

This new era began in Afghanistan in 2001, then Iraq in 2003, Haiti in 2004, Libya in 2010 and ongoing occupation of Palestine. Today the priority targets are Syria and long time central objective - Iran!

With Syria, the U.S and allies preceded their demand for the removal of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad with sanctions affecting the ability of Syrian people to access food and medicine. The U.S. is waging overt and covert operations through its CIA, puppet governments and their military forces. These operations include arming, and funding opposition forces. The result has been chaos on the verge of all out war, shattering any authentic struggle for improved social conditions. Canada is pursuing its own interests, supporting the call for the overthrow of the current Syrian government through sanctions, funding, and intensifying rhetoric.

Recently there has been discussion of a No-Fly-Zone on Syria. This is the very same intervention sprung by the UN Security Council against sovereign Libya along with

sanctions, U.S. tomahawk cruise missiles, the arming of mercenary forces and funding of a puppet "transitional government." Then came the lethal U.S. lead NATO bombing campaign that included complete support by Canada whom supplied F18 Fighter Jets to the invasion. These airstrikes killed Libyan civilians and decimated infrastructure carving out the way for the assassination of President Muammar Gaddafi. Today Libya is a fragmented country facing continued vio-

lence, corruption, foreign manipulation and exploitation. The fallacy of a resounding U.S / NATO successful mission in Libya is in fact a bleak future for the Libyan people and potentially herald what could happen in Syria. However, what takes place Syria and took place in Libya is leading directly into the heart of Iran. The U.S., Canada and allies have claimed that Iran is the single biggest threat to world peace. They have prophesized that Iran's nuclear energy development is a road to nuclear destruction. The right of the Iranians to develop their own society has been made into something sinister. Since the overthrow of the U.S. backed Shah in 1979, Iran has been a pillar of independence. It is this independence that threatens the dominance of U.S. imperialism. It is this reason that the U.S. has imposed illegal and unjust sanctions on Iran, manipulated International Atomic Energy Agency reports on Iran's nuclear development, demonized Iranian self-determination and stationed a veritable army off the coast of Iran. The U.S. of which has the largest stockpile of nuclear missiles in the world and the only country to use them not once, but twice, continues its hypocritical and deadly campaign.

Within this context imperialist countries wage an intense clamping down on human rights and freedom to protest. A relevant example is the case of Bradley Manning - the U.S. soldier, who exposed U.S. war crimes in Iraq and Afghanistan and in turn was arrested, thrown into solitary confinement, faced torture, and continues to struggle inside of prison. Bradley Manning is a hero of a fledgling antiwar movement, a fighter for humanity and a standard for fighters from the 5 Burroughs of New York, to the streets of Tunisia and Egypt. Hip Hop lives and breathes within our poor and working communities versus war and occupation. It is a voice of oppressed people across the world. It is through this art that we can broaden the movement for peace. It is within this culture that we can educate, organize and mobilize.

*"POWER TO THE PEOPLE,  
CAUSE THE PEOPLE WANT  
PEACE!"  
- PUBLIC ENEMY*



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# Che Guevara's human nature

By Manuel E. Yepe\*

*A CubaNews translation. Edited by Walter Lippmann*

One of the dimensions of the Cuban Revolution that worries its enemies the most is the identification the Cuban process achieves and maintains with the peoples all over the world despite the more than fifty year-old smear campaign paid for by imperialism and the oligarchies.

Among all the evidence supporting this criterion is the absolute respect for human life that has characterized the Cuban Revolution from the early moments of the insurrectional struggle against Fulgencio Batista's tyranny up to the present.

For this reason, the fact that in South Florida, the descendants of the torturers and murderers that fled to the United States in 1958 stealing up to the last penny of the 400 million dollars in the Cuban National Treasury –today some of these are members of the US Congress in Washington or multi-millionaire parasites fattened by US contributions to the “struggle for the return of democracy to Cuba” – dare describe the present Cuban government as a dictatorship, moves one to anger.

And even worse, is the fact that they dare accuse such a pure and clean person in the history of Latin America and the world as Ernesto Che Guevara of violations of human rights.

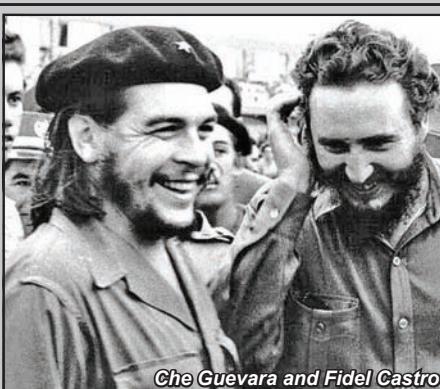
The respect and admiration for Che Guevara by people with social and political awareness on the continent and many other parts of the world is obvious in the fact that all the resources invested by the empire and reactionary forces, in attempts to reduce his prestige by vulgarizing his image and turning it into a market object, have been unable to prevent it from being present in every fair act of rebellion promoted by the most diverse popular sectors in the world.

Today, Che is a banner in the struggle

of millions of young students, women, workers, peasants, strikers, indignados and occupiers of public spaces everywhere. The lies fabricated in Miami and paid for by Washington have not made a dent in his

prestige or the mobilizing power of his example and his ideas rooted in the Cuban Revolution.

Che was responsible for one of the most significant humanitarian actions of the Cuban Revolution when, as the Commander of the Castillo de la Cabaña in Havana, he guaranteed that the main court created to judge the war crimes of the defeated



Che Guevara and Fidel Castro



Che Guevara, Raul Castro and Vilma Espin

tyranny performed an exemplary task, commendable for its organization, transparent performance and respect for the decisions of the judges.

When victory was close, the leader of the Revolution and Chief of the Rebel Army, Commander Fidel Castro Ruz, asked the population not to take justice into their own hands and promised that all those accused of crimes would be tried with all the guarantees provided by law and punished according to the seriousness of their crimes.

With this act, the Cuban Revolution

avoided a repetition of what had happened after the fall of tyrant Gerardo Machado in 1933. At that time, victims of popular wrath, hundreds of people linked to the ruthless tyranny were killed and dragged along the streets without a chance to have a defense in a court of law. At the time there had not been an authority to guarantee to the people that justice would be done.

It is very well-known that the humanitarian treatment given to the defeated became one of the most powerful weapons of the Rebel Army against the forces of Batista's tyranny.

While the forces of the tyranny –supported, trained and advised by US military– killed, tortured and abused the detained revolutionary suspects, the rebel soldiers respected the human rights of their military prisoners.

This behavior encouraged a marked disposition among the government forces to surrender to the revolutionary combatants when they were required to do so in contrast to the determination of the rebels to always resist to the death.

Che Guevara, as a doctor, frequently found himself caring for wounded enemy prisoners ahead of his own soldiers.

As an administrative manager and as a military chief he was very demanding of his subordinates in the fulfillment of their duties. They respected his command more because of the exceptional moral strength conferred by his performance and the demands made on himself than for the authority of his rank.

The human dimension of the political persona of Guevara and his critical and polemic thoughts about the building of socialism left a transcendental mark that can be seen today in every Cuban strategy.

To attack the exemplary behavior of Che Guevara in his public or private life with lies and slander paints a portrait of his defamers.

July 2012

\*Manuel E. Yepe, is a lawyer, economist and journalist. He is a professor at the Higher Institute of International Relations in Havana. He was Cuba's ambassador to Romania, general director of the Prensa Latina agency; vice president of the Cuban Institute of Radio and Television; founder and national director of the Technological Information System (TIPS) of the United Nations Program for Development in Cuba, and secretary of the Cuban Movement for the Peace and Sovereignty of the Peoples.

Una de las dimensiones de la revolución cubana que más preocupa a sus enemigos es la identificación que logra y mantiene el proceso cubano con los pueblos de todo el mundo, pese a la ya cincuentenaria campaña de descrédito que pagan el imperialismo y las oligarquías.

Entre las muchas razones que avalan este criterio está el absoluto respeto por la vida humana que ha caracterizado a la revolución cubana desde la lucha insurreccional contra la tiranía de Fulgencio Batista hasta nuestros días.

Por eso, indigna que, en el Sur de la Florida, los herederos de aquellos torturadores y asesinos que huyeron a Estados Unidos en 1958 con hasta el último de los 400 millones de dólares que había en la tesorería nacional – algunos de ellos son hoy congresistas en Washington o parásitos multimillonarios engordados con los aportes estadounidenses a la lucha por el regreso de la democracia a Cuba- osen calificar de dictadura al gobierno cubano de hoy.

Y, peor aún, que conceptúen como violador de los derechos humanos a una personalidad tan pura y limpia de la historia de Latinoamérica y del mundo como Ernesto Che Guevara.

La identificación del Che Guevara con las masas populares conscientes del continente, y de muchas otras partes del mundo, se patentiza en el hecho de que, no obstante los recursos invertidos por el imperio y la reacción intentado desprestigiarlo mediante la vulgarización de su imagen cual objeto comercializable, no han podido evitar que ésta siga acompañando a cuanta acción justa de rebeldía promovida por los más diversos segmentos populares tiene lugar en el mundo.

El Che es hoy estandarte de lucha de millones de jóvenes estudiantes, mujeres, obreros, campesinos, huelguistas, indignados y ocupantes de espacios públicos en todas partes, sin que las mentiras fabricadas en Miami y pagadas por Washington mellen su prestigio y la capacidad movilizadora de su ejemplo y sus ideas enraizadas en la revolución cubana.

Che estuvo vinculado a una de las más significativas acciones humanitarias de la revolución cubana cuando, ejerciendo la

# la condición humana del Che Guevara

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jefatura del Castillo de la Cabaña, en La Habana, garantizó que el principal tribunal creado para enjuiciar los crímenes de guerra de la tiranía derrotada realizará un trabajo ejemplar por su organización, limpio desarrollo y respeto a los veredictos de los jueces.

Cuando se acercaba la victoria, el líder de la revolución y jefe del Ejército Rebelde, Comandante Fidel Castro, llamó a la población a que no se tomara la justicia por mano propia y prometió que todos

garantizara al pueblo, como ocurrió esta vez, que se haría justicia.

Se conoce que el tratamiento al vencido con humanidad resultó una de las armas más poderosas que tuvo el Ejército Rebelde en su combate contra las fuerzas de la tiranía de Batista.

Mientras las fuerzas de la tiranía –apoyadas, entrenadas y asesoradas por militares estadounidenses- mataban, torturaban y cometían toda clase de abusos contra los detenidos sospechosos de ser revolucionarios, los combatientes rebeldes respetaban los derechos humanos de los militares que hacían prisioneros.

Esta conducta provocó en las fuerzas gubernamentales una marcada disposición a rendirse a los combatientes revolucionarios cuando eran conminados a ello, lo que contrastaba con la actitud de los rebeldes de resistir siempre hasta la muerte.

El propio Che Guevara, que era médico, se vio muchas veces en situación de atender heridos del enemigo hechos prisioneros antes que a los propios.

Como dirigente administrativo y como jefe militar destacó por su exigencia en el cumplimiento de los deberes por sus subalternos, que lo acataban más por la excepcional fuerza moral que le confería su ejemplar auto exigencia que por la autoridad de que estaba ungido por su jefatura.

La dimensión humana en la personalidad política de Guevara y su pensamiento crítico y polémico acerca de la construcción del socialismo dejaron una huella trascendental que se aprecia hoy en cada momento y en cada estrategia cubana.

Arremeter con infundios contra la conducta ejemplar del Che, tanto en su vida privada como pública, retrata a sus detractores.

- Julio de 2012

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Fidel Castro and Che Guevara



Che Guevara and Camilo Cienfuegos

los acusados de crímenes serían juzgados con todas las garantías que dan las leyes y sancionados conforme a la gravedad de sus delitos.

Con ello, la revolución cubana evitó que se repitiera lo ocurrido a la caída del tirano Gerardo Machado en 1933, cuando centenares de acusados vinculados a la cruenta dictadura fueron muertos y sus cuerpos arrastrados por las calles por la ira popular sin oportunidad de defenderse ante un tribunal, porque faltó una autoridad que

# Now is the Time to Organize Against War & Occupation!



By Alison Bodine

**O**n July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2012 a new wave of protests began in Saudi Arabia, sparked by the shooting and arrest of a prominent cleric and the killing of protestors by the repressive monarchy. The people of Saudi Arabia are inspired by the wildfire of resistance of those fighting against U.S. backed regimes in North Africa and the Middle East, the continuous protesting by the people of Bahrain and Yemen and the victorious overthrow of U.S. backed regimes in Tunisia and Egypt.

Here in Vancouver and in Canada, the major media has virtually ignored the courageous people in Saudi Arabia and their struggle. They have chosen instead to help the U.S. government and other colonial powers to beat their drums of

oppressed people in Canada need to educate ourselves about what really are the facts on the ground. Not only because it is the tax dollars of people in Canada that go towards sending bombs, fighter jets and soldiers, but because of the tremendous cost to humanity that these increasing wars and occupations bring; crippling sanctions, the destruction of infrastructure, environmental devastation and loss of human life.

This education cannot come through only the sharing of information, we must also come together for open discussion and debate. Every two weeks, Vancouver's antiwar coalition, Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) organizes free public forums to do just this and to put our ideas to the test.

On Tuesday July 24<sup>th</sup> peace-loving people in Vancouver gathered for "Saudi Arabia: Mass Movement for Democracy and Independence!" The first speaker of the forum was Nita Palmer, author of the book "War and Occupation in Afghanistan: Which Way Forward" published by Battle of Ideas Press. Nita spoke about the history of Saudi Arabia and gave more information about, not only the more recent protests, but also the protests that had begun over one and a half years ago. Next to speak was Aaron Mercredi, organizer with the Indigenous Rights and Action Project (IRAP). Aaron brought the struggle in Saudi Arabia within the context of growing imperialist wars and occupation in the region.

Discussion following the presentation by speakers focused on the main question of the event – What is the significance of protests in Saudi Arabia for the antiwar movement in Canada? Though by the end of the event, the answer to that question was not complete, the debate and discussion that was generated helped us all to better understand and learn from



MAWO forum on Saudi Arabia on July 24, 2012

war against Syria and Iran. Whether coming from the mouths of reporters, or of politicians, it is clear that in this era of increasing wars and occupations, manipulation and distortion of facts is one of the tools used by world powers to convince people that more sanctions, bombings and wars are necessary.

Because of this, we as poor, working and

people in Saudi Arabia and to bring their struggle here to Canada.

The need for education and to arm ourselves for debate is especially true when it comes to countries that stand in the way to complete U.S. domination in the Middle East- Iran and Syria. Syria faces constantly increasing sanctions, covert foreign intervention and non-stop rhetoric from colonial powers for the overthrow of the President of Syria, Bashar al Assad. The MAWO public forum "Syria: Is There a Revolution or Counter-Revolution? Fact or Fiction?!" organized on Au-



MAWO forum on Syria on August 7, 2012

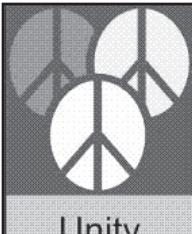
gust 7<sup>th</sup> exposed the lies and distortions of imperialist governments and the mainstream media. The main presentation by Janine Solanki, Co-chair of Mobilization Against War and Occupation generated a lively discussion about what is really happening on the ground in Syria and why there is so much confusion about Syria's civil war.

Alongside free public forums MAWO also organizes a monthly antiwar rally and petition campaign, picket actions, conferences and cultural events.

The next rally and petition campaign is this Saturday August 21<sup>st</sup>, at 1pm at the Vancouver Art Gallery. We will be joining together for an afternoon of raising our voices and petitioning for Hands Off Syria! Hands Off Iran! and Free Bradley Manning Now!

MAWO is also organizing the 8<sup>th</sup> International Hip Hop 4 Peace festival, bringing together dozens of artists from all over the world for two days of concerts and workshops here in the Lower Mainland. The festival is taking place on September 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> (for more information see the Hip Hop article on this issue of FTT).

More about MAWO's events can be found at [www.mawovancouver.org](http://www.mawovancouver.org)



# United National Antiwar Coalition

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Unity

## August, 2012 **UNAC Statement Against War on Iran & Syria**

**DANGEROUS ESCALATION IN  
THREATS OF MILITARY ACTION  
AGAINST SYRIA AND IRAN AND  
INCREASED RACIST VIOLENCE  
AND REPRESSION AT HOME**

**UNAC CALLS FOR EDUCATION  
AND ACTION**

**NO WARS/NO SANCTIONS/  
NO DRONES/NO THREATS/  
NO PROVOCATIONS/NO  
ASSASSINATIONS**

**NO TO RACISM, RAIDS, AND  
REPRESSION**

**BUILD OCTOBER 7 ACTIONS  
AGAINST WARS ABROAD AND  
POLICE STATE ATTACKS ON  
CIVIL LIBERTIES AT HOME**

The news is filled with alarming new threats of attacks on Syria and Iran. Secretary of State Clinton says the U.S. and Turkey are discussing details for a “No-Fly Zone” over Syria. We know from the Libyan experience that a “No-Fly Zone” would require massive NATO bombing of Syrian air defenses and huge civilian casualties. At the same time, State Department spokespeople are targeting Iran and Hezbollah for alleged military support to the Assad government and unsubstantiated terrorist actions. These claims and increased sanctions are designed to justify increased U.S. intervention. Israel says Iran is on the verge of developing nuclear weapons. Israel, whose belligerence was recently rewarded by the U.S. gift of a \$680M missile shield (added to the \$3.1 billion for military aid this year), has again gone to the airwaves threatening pre-emptive military

action against Iran in the near future.

All of this sounds eerily familiar as lead-ups to new wars, when the old ones have not ended. This is how the public was whipped up and the basis was laid before attacking Iraq and Libya. Going after Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Yemen, and Libya, causing massive loss of life and destruction, could be small potatoes compared to the conflagration we might see following military intervention in Syria, Iran and Lebanon. This would also prevent achievement of the promise we witnessed with the Arab Spring uprisings. All of this stemming from a rapacious drive for imperialist domination of resources and power.

At the same time, we see increased repression and poverty at home. Islamophobia and scapegoating of Muslims leads to manufactured frame-ups and violence against the Muslim community, and by extension brutal attacks on Sikhs as well. Immigrants are targeted. Increased militarization of our society leads to an expansion of surveillance and stop-and-frisk operations, military weapons in the hands of police, and an



explosion of the prison industry with mass incarceration of Black and Latino youth. Civil liberties and the right to dissent are under siege with indefinite detention and extra-judicial assassinations now the law of the land.

To pay for wars and to maximize the profits

of the haves, they take more and more from the have-nots. We see cuts to the social safety nets, attacks on labor, privatization of government programs, huge unemployment, neglect of infrastructure, rapid climate change and poisoning of the environment.

When we need a strong and unified movement to mobilize against these horrors, much of the left is confused by the misinformation and distracted by the elections. We can't be falsely assured that elections will save us when the wars and repressions have been bi-partisan. We are not powerless. We must do everything we can to counter these threats.

What should we do?

- Counter the media propaganda and educate people about the realities on the ground with teach-ins, forums, protests, letters to the editor, op-eds, phone calls to Congress, petitions, resolutions and referendums. Be creative.

- Reach out to new constituencies and form alliances based on our connected interests – students, Occupy activists, workers, immigrant groups, Muslims, community groups, civil liberties organizations, antiwar committees, international solidarity groups, communities of color.

- If there is direct military intervention or a “No Fly Zone”, we must pour into the streets with day-after mobilizations.

- Stand in solidarity with victims of police, state, and racial violence and repression and build links to people under attack – Sikhs, Muslims, undocumented workers, death row prisoners, African-American and Latino youth, social justice activists are all targets in an atmosphere of escalating racism and repression.

- Build regional and local actions all over the country focused on the dual wars abroad and at home-on Sunday, October 7, the anniversary of the attack on Afghanistan and the initiation of the global War of Terror on the 99% in the interests of the 1%.

**LET'S STAND TOGETHER IN UNITY AND SOLIDARITY. TOGETHER WE ARE POWERFUL!**

August 7, 2012 MAWO Public Forum

# Syria: Is There a Revolution or Counter-Revolution? Facts & Fiction?!

A talk by Janine Solanki

*O*n August 7, 2012, Mobilization Against War & Occupation (MAWO) in Vancouver, Canada held a public forum titled "Syria: Is There a Revolution or Counter-Revolution? Facts & Fiction?!" This forum was part of ongoing antiwar forums organized by MAWO every second week on issues of imperialist war and occupation. The following is an excerpt from the talk given at the forum, by MAWO co-chair Janine Solanki. For the purposes of this article, the talk has been reduced to 2,000 words from the original 4,000 words.

## Civil War in Syria

Right now Syria is under a rapidly escalating struggle, not between rebels and the Syrian government as is touted in the media every day, but between imperialist backed forces and an independent government and country that is resisting to be overthrown by the hand of imperialism. Right now Syria is in a full on state of war, but not just in a regular civil war between two opposing sides. This is a civil war where the opposition force is going against the government that, whether you like it or not, is popular and has broad support. And this so-called opposition is receiving weapons from foreign powers, receiving funding from foreign powers, and is even receiving on the ground support in the form of mercenaries from other countries who are coming to fight this so-called civil war in Syria. And we have seen this building and building over the last year and a half, also with increasing sanctions, from countries like the United States and Canada, condemnations from US officials and politicians and

other imperialist governments around the world. And now coming to the very near threat, the very possible threat of a foreign intervention, and if not that, even if not a direct foreign military intervention, the kind of fighting that we're seeing now, with the inside force being completely funded and armed by outside forces.

## Syria, Independent or Colonial, That is



## the Question!

So why is this conflict receiving so much attention and support from Canada, the US and other imperialist countries around the world? Everything we see on the news today about Syria, and what the US government is planning and acting on, is a result of imperialist ambition to overthrow not only the government of Syria because it's the government of Syria, but because it's a government that's independent. Independent in a very important region of the world right now, in the Middle East. For the United States to have the Middle

East completely within its grip, as they have been trying to for the last many years, especially in the last 10 years, there can be no country that does not answer to US colonial policies, and does not have a puppet regime like we saw for so many years in Tunisia, in Egypt, as we see in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain and so many other countries. As long as examples of countries not under the yoke of foreign imperialist domination exist in the Middle East, so they present the influence and resistance against US domination. So for so many years we've had three main countries that have stood up against these attacks and this domination from US imperialism – Iran, Syria and Libya. And amid every country in the Middle East or Africa either under occupation or with puppet regimes and military bases, these three countries presented resistance and independence. But also under constant pressure, under constant conflict with US covert operations, media campaigns, sanctions... throughout all of this for many years, they remained independent.

So I think when we talk about Syria we have behind us an example that is very similar. We saw Libya go through the same process of a so-called mass movement spring up, which was a group of people who were right away armed, and right away the mass media and imperialist governments pushing for the overthrow of that independent government, and what we saw was the outcome of Libya, we saw over 30,000

*continued on page 16*

bombs dropped on that country and the killing of at least 25,000 innocent people. Well, this is what we are supposed to learn from imperialist countries when they are attempting to save the lives of people, as this is exactly what they claimed at the beginning for why they should impose a no-fly zone over Libya.

### Syrian Opposition and Rebels: Where Do They All Come From?

But this is all kind of looking at the last year and a half, in the Middle East especially. But when we look at the global scale, imperialist forces launched the new era of war and occupation more than a decade ago. With the excuse of 9/11 (September 11, 2001), they invaded and occupied Afghanistan which for now over a decade has been occupied. They ramped up a new war drive to combat the world's economic crisis that has been affecting imperialist countries and has been something that imperialist governments have taken the band-aid solution fix to, of invading and attacking colonial and semi-colonial, developing, poor and independent countries, to exploit their cheap labour, to plunder their resources and to gain a upper hand



and gain more influence in those regions, as the United States is trying to now in the Middle East, Africa and Latin America. But of course all of this when we're talking about Syria is not what anyone is hearing in the mainstream news. What they are hearing is that Syrian government forces are blood-thirsty, committing massacres against their own people, but what's really going on in Syria? Who are the so-called

Syrian opposition rebels and their so called Free Syrian Army? These are not people that just came out of nowhere. For many years the United States has been holding meetings with opposition groups and their people in Syria, providing funding and support and training to them, and you have to just ask yourself, what kind of legitimate opposition gets their support from the biggest imperialist power in the world, and at what price? First of all, looking at how all of this started, this armed opposition to the Syrian government began in March of 2011, in Daraa, a small town on the Jordanian border. And this is from RT, on March 13. They said "mass protest movements usually start in large population centers. Later, Saudi Arabia admitted sending weapons to the opposition via Jordan." So right from the beginning you see the foreign influence in this

so-called mass movement. On June 21 of this year, the New York Times "reported that a number of CIA officers in southern Turkey are "helping" allies decide which Syrian opposition fighters across the border will receive arms, with the funding of US allies Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar. These weapons are reported to include automatic rifles, rocket-propelled grenades, ammunition and some antitank weapons." Besides even this military support, US allies are even putting Free Syrian Army fighters on a payroll. Saudi Arabia recently shared with the Guardian newspaper that they planned to pay future military deserters in dollars and euros. And this report came from a little while ago, now there is more reports that yes, they are on that payroll, yes they are receiving funding.

### Mainstream Media: Information as a Tool to Misinform

So we are seeing all of this being flipped on its head when we hear about it in the mainstream news and media and this is the kind of thing that people like the guy I work with read and take without any critical thinking as true. But we can always ask the question, if the US cares so much about the people in Syria, if they are so intent on having news on Syria every day pushing condemnations of the Syrian government and pressure on the Syrian government, and they claim to care so much about the Syrian people, then why do they not say anything about the people of Saudi Arabia



or Bahrain, who are rising up as a legitimate mass movement, and are being repressed by those US backed governments.

Right now they are able to use kind of third parties, they are able to use their allies like Saudi Arabia and Qatar, to fund and send weapons to the Syrian rebels. They are able to go through these rebels and mercenaries from other countries in Syria to fight against the government and potentially overthrow the government of Syria. And also there is the option of provoking the government of Syria. Such as what we saw a little over a month ago when a Turkish fighter jet flew into Syrian airspace and was shot down. And right away you had Western, US, Canada and all of the other imperialist allies crying foul on the Syrian government, saying they had shot down this plane in international waters, when every shred of evidence showed that this fighter jet had not just even come into Syrian air space a little bit, but came 13 miles into Syrian airspace. And all of this evidence, more and more as the days went on, became clear. And this is the kind of provocation that the imperialist forces, the United States, can use to their advantage. If Turkey and Syria at that point had entered into a war, this would have brought on NATO forces into the war, and would have brought the kind of provocation that would bring on the kind of intervention, maybe, that we saw in Libya.

### **Peace Plan for Syria??!!**

Also one point that I want to bring up because it's so recent and so prevalent in the news right now, is the recent resignation of Kofi Annan as the United Nations special envoy to Syria. And after months and months of putting forward this so-called "peace plan for Syria", when Kofi Annan resigned he called it a "mission impossible." Yes a mission impossible because it is not really a mission for peace. This peace process was never for peace. This peace process was to buy time, to further scapegoat the government of Syria, and also to slander the government of Syria, when the so-called ceasefire was put into place, which was agreed on by the government of Syria, and never by the Free Syrian Army - from that situation, you saw headlines saying that Syria wasn't



*Protest against foreign intervention in front of US Embassy in Damascus, Syria on May 11, 2011*

respecting the ceasefire. And further using this to slander the government of Syria. This buying time bought imperialist forces time to reorganize and train mercenaries, to get them into Syria, to pressure the Syrian government, through pushing their imperialist backed rebel forces into those areas and into fighting and also through their condemnations of the Syrian government, trying to pressure them to bring their troops out of major Syria cities. Like Damascus and Aleppo.

### **Unity and Building a Strong Anti War Movement**

But one last point that I want to go back to, kind of going in a bit of circle from where I started, is that we really have not seen the type of antiwar movement that we want to see, against a potential war and

against

even the covert operations and indirect interventions in Syria and the potential of a military intervention in Syria. There has been, as there has been confusion with my co-worker as I started with, this is also a confusion we have seen with so many political groups, in Canada, the United States and beyond, and in the general public. I think we've seen a very very effective media campaign, we've seen that a lot of people in the general public and in other political groups would like to look at the Syrian rebels and call them legitimate revolutionaries, and call them a legitimate fighting force against a regime. But as we went through earlier, this is not a legitimate fighting force against this government, this is not the kind of mass movement that we saw in Tunisia and Egypt, this is not any movement to be confused with any kind of revolutionaries. This is a fight of imperialism against an independent government, a sovereign country, a country that has not accepted to be slave of the United States. This is what we need to present when we go out to the streets, when we have our petition campaigns, when we talk to our friends, when we talk to anyone that we can, we need to be bringing this message of what is really happening, what the truth really is, and what the danger really is. We don't want to see this new era of war and occupation hit yet another country and destroy yet another country. We want to see a world without war and occupation and this can only be achieved through self-determination and sovereignty for all oppressed nations.



# Who is the Real Terrorist Country?

**the one that exports doctors and nurses,  
or  
the one that exports war and death?!**

On July 31, the U.S. State Department once again included Cuba on its arbitrary, unilateral list of "countries which sponsor international terrorism."

Yet again, the only reason Cuba is kept on this list is exposed as an attempt to justify the U.S. blockade of our country, as well as the adoption of new measures to limit our financial and commercial transactions, to strangle the Cuban economy and impose a regime which responds to U.S. interests.

On this occasion, the U.S. government attempts to sustain this discredited exercise with a new, slanderous accusation as to the supposed failure of Cuba's banking system to take measures to confront money laundering and financial transactions linked to terrorism.

With this tall tale the United States hopes to conceal the fact that Cuba regularly provides precise, truthful information to the appropriate United Nations bodies charged with addressing these issues and others related to confronting terrorism. The U.S. blatantly ignores the Cuban government's repeated proposals, made again as recently as February, 2012, to agree

upon a bilateral program to confront terrorism. The U.S. government has not responded.

The United States does not have any moral authority whatsoever to judge us. It is widely known that the U.S. government has used state terrorism as a weapon in its policy toward Cuba, causing 3,478 deaths and 2,099 permanent injuries and has harbored, over time, dozens of terrorists, some of whom live freely within the country, while Cuba's five anti-terrorist fighters remain unjustly imprisoned or detained. The U.S. is also the principal center of money laundering on the planet and the lack of regulation of its financial system detonated the current global economic crisis.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs forcefully rejects the manipulation of an issue as sensitive as terrorism for such narrow political ends against Cuba and demands that the U.S. government stop lying and put an end to this shameful practice which offends the Cuban people and discredits international efforts in the struggle against terrorism.

Havana, August 1, 2012



Cuban Doctors in Haiti



U.S. Troops in Iraq

**Join the  
Campaign to  
Free Soldier  
of Humanity  
Bradley  
Manning!**



By Janine Solanki

Bradley Manning is accused of leaking over 260,000 classified United States diplomatic cables, as well as videos and documents which have become known as the Afghan War Diary and the Iraq War Logs. Published on the whistleblower site WikiLeaks, they further exposed U.S. war crimes around the world including mass killings, torture, corruption, and the government's web of lies. Bradley Manning made a courageous decision to let the world know the truth behind the atrocities being hidden by the United States government.

Over the past two years of imprisonment, the U.S. military "justice" system has used torture and unjust, criminal treatment to punish Bradley Manning and to say to other soldiers "if you speak out, this will happen to you." But this has only made the call for justice and the demand for civil and human rights stronger and louder by Bradley Manning's supporters around the world. Bradley was held in solitary confinement for the first 10 months of his incarceration. During this time he was denied meaningful exercise, social interaction, sunlight, and has occasionally been kept completely naked. These conditions were unique to Bradley and are illegal even under U.S. military law as they amount to extreme pre-trial punishment. In the upcoming August 27 – 31 pre-trial hearings, the conditions that Bradley has faced in his two years of detention will be taken into account.

While the legal proceedings take place, the strongest defense for Bradley Manning is that of the people all around the world taking to the streets with their picket signs, banners and voices demanding "Free Bradley Manning!" Here in Vancouver, Canada, the Free Bradley Manning Campaign is working in coordination with international efforts and organizes petition drives, forums and pickets at the U.S. Consulate to demand freedom for Bradley Manning. With a strong and consistent international campaign, we can keep Bradley Manning's case in the public eye and under public pressure, and see this soldier for humanity free! For more info: [www.bradleymanning.org](http://www.bradleymanning.org) To get involved in the Free Bradley Manning Campaign in Vancouver, Canada visit [www.mawvancouver.org](http://www.mawvancouver.org)

By Manuel Yepe\*

*A CubaNews translation. Edited by Walter Lippmann*

With this title an essay published by Counterpunch characterizes as striking the new transparency of the official public acknowledgement of a half-century-old, broad-based US targeted assassination program that coincides with the unprecedented visibility of drone warfare in several areas of the planet.

The idea of the existence of a "kill list" at the highest level of US executive power has set off a firestorm of media coverage that indicates a significant concern even among sectors of the "invisible power".

A Washington Post editorial noted that "No government has ever relied so extensively on the secret killing of individuals to advance the nation's security goals." The New York Times described Obama's role as "without precedent in presidential history, of personally overseeing the shadow war ..."

Former president James Carter insisted, in a recent op-ed column in the New York Times, "We don't know how many hundreds of innocent civilians have been killed in these [drone] attacks, each one approved by the highest authorities in Washington. This would have been unthinkable in previous times."

In fact, these long-distance homicides and selective assassinations with presidential approval have been going on covertly for at least half a century. The only novelty is the open nature of the latest, more publicized revelations about hit lists and assassinations with the use of drones. "Those who are mortified by the latest revelations of Obama's hit lists have much to learn from a more comprehensive, historical perspective on US killing around the globe," says Noble.

The author divides the analysis of the 50 years of massacres and targeted killings by the USA into three sections:

Section 1 describes the lethal history of the US Phoenix Program in Vietnam, the original source of subsequent US counter-terrorist tactics and strategies.

# THE ASSASSINATION NATION



Section 2 revisits briefly the well-known history of US kill lists and assassinations in Latin American countries, followed by the somewhat less-well-known history of US kill lists and assassinations in countries on other continents.

Section 3 traces the resurrection of Phoenix in Iraq and Afghanistan, and in a growing number of "countries we are not at war with."

The US Phoenix program was a highly secret operation applied in 1967 by the CIA in Vietnam aimed at "neutralizing" the "Vietcong" infrastructure. This meant assassinating South Vietnamese civilians suspected of supporting North Vietnamese or "Vietcong" fighters.

William Colby, CIA Director at the time, insisted in the 1971 Congressional Hearings that "the Phoenix program is not a program of assassination," but he later conceded that Phoenix operations killed over 20,000 people between 1967 and 1972. The My Lai massacre, hardly an isolated incident, was itself a Phoenix operation.

With abundant data and arguments, Doug Noble describes the repercussions of this program in Latin America.

The US intelligence community adapted

Phoenix to South America by commissioning the ultra secret Project X.

Phoenix methods and techniques were used in Operation Condor which was responsible for the assassination of several hundred thousand Latin American patriots. Criminal organizations in almost all

the countries in the region served Phoenix for collection, exchange and storage of intelligence and collaborated in the repression of the struggle and ideals that stood against the hegemonic role of the USA in the continent.

During the Carter administration the USA suspended the application of Project X for alleged human rights violations, but the Reagan administration resumed it soon enough.

"The US drone killing program has come out of the closet. Those of us protesting US drones for years have correctly focused on the use of drones as illegal, immoral and strategically counterproductive. We have abhorred the schizophrenic ease of remote killing, the uniquely frightening horror of a drone strike, and the unavoidable (even intentional) killing of countless civilian "terrorist suspects" in "signature strikes." We have also warned of the proliferation of drones in countries around the globe and of their procurement by US police forces and border patrols, for surveillance and "non-lethal" targeting", states Doug Noble, an activist against war who resides in Rochester.

The Phoenix Program has become global thus contributing to proclaim the United States of America as a real assassination nation.

July 2012

\*Manuel E. Yepe, is a lawyer, economist and journalist. He is a professor at the Higher Institute of International Relations in Havana. He was Cuba's ambassador to Romania, general director of the Prensa Latina agency; vice president of the Cuban Institute of Radio and Television; founder and national director of the Technological Information System (TIPS) of the United Nations Program for Development in Cuba, and secretary of the Cuban Movement for the Peace and Sovereignty of the Peoples.

# LA NACION ASESINA

Por Manuel Yeye\*

Un ensayo de este título publicado en la revista Counterpunch califica de sorprendente el reconocimiento oficial y la novedosa transparencia con que se ha hecho público que Estados Unidos dispone, desde hace más de medio siglo, de un programa de asesinatos selectivos que ahora coincide con una visibilización sin precedente del uso de aviones de guerra guiados por control remoto en diversos puntos del planeta. La noción de que exista una lista de gente a matar en el más alto nivel del poder ejecutivo de Estados Unidos ha hecho que el tema haya tenido una fuerte cobertura mediática, lo que denota preocupación por el hecho incluso en algunos sectores del llamado "poder invisible".

El Washington Post señaló editorialmente que "ningún gobierno ha dependido tan extensivamente del asesinato de individuos para hacer avanzar los objetivos de seguridad de la nación como el actual". Por su parte, el New York Times describe como "algo sin precedentes en la historia presidencial el papel de Obama como supervisor directo de esta guerra en las sombras..." El ex Presidente James Carter, en un artículo que publicó en el New York Times, insistió en que "no se sabe cuántos cientos de civiles inocentes han muerto en estos ataques (con drones), cada uno de ellos aprobado por las máximas autoridades en Washington. Es algo antes impensable".

Pero el hecho cierto es que estos homicidios a distancia y los asesinatos selectivos con aprobación presidencial, han tenido lugar secretamente desde hace al menos medio siglo. Lo único novedoso es que las recientes revelaciones sobre las listas de gente a matar y los asesinatos con uso de drones se estén haciendo de forma tan abierta. "Quienes se alarman por las recientes revelaciones acerca de los listados de gente a matar de Obama, tendrían que conocer, desde una perspectiva histórica, cuántas personas nuestro país ha asesinado en el mundo",



apunta Noble.

El autor reseña los cincuenta años de masacres y asesinatos selectivos de Estados Unidos en tres partes.

La primera describe la historia letal del programa de Fénix (Phoenix, en inglés) contra Vietnam, que define como la fuente original de las estrategias y tácticas terroristas posteriores de Estados Unidos.

La segunda trata acerca de las conocidas listas de gente a matar en Latinoamérica, y las menos divulgadas de países de otros continentes.

La tercera aborda la resurrección del programa Fénix en Irak, Afganistán y un creciente número de países con los cuales "no estamos en guerra".

Fénix fue un programa altamente secreto desarrollado en 1967 por la CIA en Vietnam con el fin de "neutralizar" la infraestructura del Vietcong asesinando civiles sud vietnamitas sospechosos de apoyar a los combatientes vietnamitas del Norte y del Vietcong. Aunque el entonces Director de la CIA, William Colby, declaró ante el Congreso en 1971 que "Fénix no es un programa de asesinatos", admitió posteriormente que las operaciones de Fénix mataron a más de 20.000 personas entre 1967 y 1972. La matanza de

My Lai fue apenas una operación más del programa Fénix.

Con abundantes datos y argumentos, Doug Noble describe la repercusión que este programa ha tenido para Latinoamérica.

La comunidad de inteligencia estadounidense adaptó Fénix a Suramérica mediante un ultra secreto Proyecto X.

Los métodos y técnicas de Fénix fueron utilizados en la Operación Cóndor, responsable del asesinato de varios cientos de miles de patriotas latinoamericanos. Las organizaciones criminales de casi todos los países de la región sirvieron a Fénix para la obtención e intercambio de información y colaboraron en la represión de las luchas e ideales contrarios al hegemonismo de Estados Unidos en el subcontinente.

Durante la administración de Carter, Estados Unidos suspendió la aplicación del Proyecto X por presuntas violaciones de los derechos humanos, pero bien pronto la administración de Reagan reimplantó su vigencia.

"El programa de asesinatos con drones de Estados Unidos ha salido del closet. Quienes durante años hemos protestado y combatido el ilegal, inmoral y estratégicamente contraproducente uso de drones, la aptitud esquizofrénica de matar por control remoto, el terror que genera un ataque de drones y el inevitable (o intencional) asesinato de cuantiosos civiles 'sospechosos de terrorismo' advertimos ahora contra la proliferación de los drones en el mundo y su utilización por fuerzas de policía y patrullas de frontera para labores de vigilancia y objetivos supuestamente no letales", señala Doug Noble, un activista contra las guerras con residencia en la ciudad neoyorquina de Rochester.

El programa Fénix se ha hecho global, contribuyendo a proclamar a los Estados Unidos de América como una verdadera nación asesina.

Julio de 2012

\*Manuel E. Yeye Menéndez es periodista y se desempeña como Profesor adjunto en el Instituto Superior de las Relaciones Internacionales de La Habana.



# STATEMENT ON SYRIA & IRAN

Taken from: [www.veteransforpeace.org](http://www.veteransforpeace.org)

**W**e are once again on the verge of another disastrous war in the Middle East. The United States and its allies in Europe and the Middle East, especially Saudi Arabia and Qatar, are consciously pushing Syria toward a destructive civil war. The objective is to bring down the Assad regime, an ally of the Iranian government, as a stepping-stone toward further isolation of Iran and preparation of the ground for a military attack on that country.

At the same time, the United States, European Union and Israel are using Iran's civilian nuclear program as an excuse to impose devastating economic sanctions against the people of Iran. According to various sources, the sanctions have already wreaked havoc on the Iranian economy, leading to inflation rates of 50 to 100 percent, youth unemployment rate of over 22 percent, drastic reduction of Iran's domestic production to 40 percent of its capacity, massive closure of economic enterprises and widespread layoffs, and 40 percent drop in the Iranian oil exports during 2012, resulting in a loss of \$32 billion in oil

This is nothing but a clear declaration of economic war on Iran. These devastating sanctions are not an "alternative" to war; they are part and parcel of a war aimed at forcing a regime change in Iran as an integral part of the US plan for a "Greater Middle East." Let us not forget the case of Iraq. There, too, a decade of devastating sanctions was used as a "softening period" that would weaken Iraq's economic infrastructure; make the population desperate enough to welcome any foreign intervention; and reduce Iraq's military capability to resist an invasion — i.e., making Iraq an easy military target. Now the same scenario is being repeated with Iran.

All this is being done in the name of removing the threat of nuclear weapons proliferation in the Middle East. But this is just a cover. Iran is already surrounded by the US and Israeli nuclear weapons. The very forces that are threatening Iran over its civil nuclear program are themselves responsible for nuclear weapons proliferation in the Middle East. A US/Israeli military attack on Iran will have disastrous, unpredictable consequences for the peoples of the Middle East region and the world, and will be a serious threat to peace and security of all nations.

The real solution lies not in selective targeting of Iran with sanctions and threats of war, but in complete removal of all nuclear weapons from the Middle East region. The Middle East, like Latin America and Africa, must be declared as a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) calls for both the liquidation of nuclear weapons by states and the discouragement of non-nuclear states from obtaining or developing nuclear weapons; and the UN General Assembly has repeatedly called for the establishment of a Nuclear-Free Zone in the Middle East. As an urgent response to the nuclear crisis in the Middle East, the 2010 NPT Conference has called for the convening of a Conference in December 2012, in Helsinki, Finland, for



Anti-intervention protest in Syria on July 31, 2012

the establishment of a WMD-Free Zone in the Middle East. This initiative must be supported and its success must be guaranteed.

Recognizing the critical nature of the present situation in the Middle East and the threat of an imminent war, Veterans For Peace, Calls for immediate lifting of all economic sanctions against Iran;

Demands immediate cessation of US and Israeli military threats against Iran;

Declares its solidarity with the Iranian people in their just struggle for freedom, justice and peace;

Demands immediate cessation of all foreign intervention in the internal affairs of Syria, including an immediate end to the illegal arming of surrogate forces fighting the government; establishment of an immediate ceasefire on all sides; and allowing the peaceful people of Syria to decide their destiny democratically and independently;

Calls for recognition of the Middle East as a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone by all parties involved, including the US, Israel and Iran, and the removal of all nuclear weapons from the Middle East region;

Urge all VFP Chapters and the broader peace movement to press the US government to support the Helsinki Conference and the establishment of a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone in the Middle East as a concrete and logical solution to the present crisis in the region.



Anti-U.S. protest in Iran on December 28, 2011

income since last year alone. It is expected that the new round of expanded sanctions, which started on July 1st of this year, will further reduce the Iranian oil exports to a mere 1.5 million barrels a day, thus pushing Iran into a fatal economic crisis.



### Families of assassinated Iranian scientists sue Israel, US, UK

Taken from [www.presstv.com](http://www.presstv.com)

The families of Iranian nuclear scientists assassinated by foreign-backed terrorists have filed a lawsuit against Israel, the United States and the United Kingdom, for their involvement in the murders.

Rahim Ahmadi Roshan, father of Iranian scientist Mostafa Ahmadi Roshan, who was killed in a terrorist attack in January, told a press conference in Tehran on Wednesday, that the families have asked Iran's Judiciary to pursue their complaints and bring those responsible for the assassinations to justice.

In November 2011, some US presidential candidates said operations should be carried out against Iran, such as assassinations of Iranian nuclear scientists, sabotage of Tehran's nuclear program, and even a military strike on the country.

Iranian scientists Ahmadi Roshan, Daryoush Rezaeinejad, Professor Majid Shahriari, and Professor Masoud Ali-Mohammadi were all assassinated by Israeli agents, according to Iran.

Ahmadi Roshan and his driver (Reza Qashqaei) were assassinated on January 11 after a motorcyclist attached a magnetic bomb to their car in Tehran.

On July 23, 2011, gunmen killed Rezaeinejad outside his house in Tehran. Rezaeinejad and his wife were on their way to their child's kindergarten when they were approached by two men on a motorbike. The gunmen called him by name and shot Rezaeinejad, 35, in the neck when he turned around.

On November 29, 2010, terrorists attached bombs to the vehicles of Iranian university professors Majid Shahriari and Fereydoun Abbasi and detonated them. Professor Shahriari was killed immediately, but Dr. Abbasi and his wife only sustained minor injuries.

Professor Ali-Mohammadi, a lecturer at Tehran University, was killed by a booby-trapped motorbike in the Iranian capital in January 2010. The bombing took place near the professor's home in the Qeytariyah neighborhood of northern Tehran.

The United States, Israel, and some of their allies accuse Tehran of pursuing military objectives in its nuclear program and have used the false charge as a pretext to push for the imposition of sanctions on the country and to call for an attack on the country.

Iran argues that as a signatory to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency, it has the right to develop and acquire nuclear technology meant for peaceful purposes.

### 'End of capitalism': Bolivia to expel Coca-Cola in wake of 2012 Mayan 'apocalypse'

Taken from [www.rt.com](http://www.rt.com)

In a symbolic rejection of US capitalism, Bolivia announced it will expel the Coca-Cola Company from the country at the end of the Mayan calendar. This will mark the end of capitalism and usher in a new era of equality, the Bolivian govt says.

"December 21 of 2012 will be the end of egoism and division. December 21 should be the end of Coca-Cola," Bolivian foreign minister David Choquehuanca decreed, with bombast worthy of a viral marketing campaign.

The coming 'end' of the Mayan lunar calendar on December 21 of this year has sparked widespread doomsaying of an impending apocalypse. But Choquehuanca argued differently, claiming it will be the end of days for capitalism, not the planet.

"The planets will align for the first time in 26,000 years and this is the end of capitalism and the beginning of communitarianism," said Choquehuanca as quoted by Venezuelan newspaper *El Periodiquito*.

The minister encouraged the people of Bolivia to drink Mocochinche, a peach-flavored soft drink, as an alternative to Coca-Cola. Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez followed suit, encouraging his country to ditch the American beverage for fruit juice produced in Venezuela.

#### McFailure

Last year, Bolivia became the second Latin American country not to have a single McDonald's. The fast food giant finally gave up on Bolivia after being unable to turn a profit in the country for over a decade.

Following this failure, the monolithic multinational released a documentary titled 'Why McDonald's failed in Bolivia.' Referencing surveys, sociologists, nutritionists and historians, the company came to the conclusion it was not their food that was the issue, but a culturally driven boycott.

Bolivian President Evo Morales has a reputation for controversial policies similar to the Coca-Cola ban. Morales pledged last month to legalize the consumption of coca leaves, one of the main ingredients of cocaine.

"Neither the US nor capitalist countries have a good reason to maintain the ban on coca leaf consumption," said Morales.

The coca leaf was declared an illegal narcotic by the UN in 1961, along with cocaine, opium and morphine. The consumption of coca leaves is a centuries-old tradition in Bolivia, strongly rooted in the beliefs of various indigenous groups.

# ***My Journey on the 20th Anniversary Pastors for Peace Caravan to Cuba***

## ***An Eye Witness Account of an Organizer***

***By Tamara Hansen***

***I**n the last issue of *Fire This Time* we had a special section about the journey of the 2012 Pastors for Peace Caravan to Cuba in British Columbia up to the BC, Canada/Washington, US border. However, after entering Washington the 2012 Caravan still had a long ways to get to its destination of Cuba in order to challenge the United States' blockade.*

### **What is the IFCO/Pastors for Peace Caravan to Cuba?**

Since 1992 the Pastors for Peace Friendship Caravan to Cuba has been challenging the United States government's economic and travel blockade on Cuba which has been imposed on the Cuban people for over 50 years. This summer was the 23rd Caravan which traveled through Canada, the US and Mexico raising awareness about the US blockade and gathering humanitarian aid to take to Cuba. This year's Caravan marked the 20th anniversary of the Pastors for Peace Caravans to Cuba. Over the past 20 years thousands of participants and over 30,000 tons of humanitarian aid have been brought to Cuba, building a 'people-to-people' foreign policy based on mutual respect, solidarity and friendship between the people of the US, Canada, Mexico and Cuba. From Vancouver, Canada, Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) has been actively supporting and organizing with the Caravan since 2005. I have had the privilege of sending-off 7 Caravans from BC, but this was the first year where rather than sending off the bus, I actually had the chance to get on and go!

### **The BC/Washington Border Crossing**

In the week leading up to the border crossing the Caravan, organizers with VCSC,



and our BC route speaker, Bill Hackwell – from the International Committee to Free the Cuban 5 – had travelled throughout BC to speak out against the United States' unjust and illegal blockade against Cuba and to collect humanitarian aid. On July 1, 2012 supporters of the Caravan from across BC and Washington gathered at the BC/Washington border to send off 7 caravanistas and a truck full of aid. After a picnic in the park we began our march on the border, with signs, banners, Cuban flags and the truck. The truck and aid were denied entry into the US at the Peace Arch Boarder Crossing, and protestors were sent to the Commercial Truck Crossing. There we continued our chanting and noise making to demand the aid be let through. Negotiations with the US border guards took place late into the night, with the US border guards finally offering to accept the humanitarian aid minus all sports equipment, which they arbitrarily decided was no longer humanitarian aid. Caravan supporters refused to be bullied, knowing that sports equipment has been let through that crossing for close to 20 years. So, we occupied the border and many stayed overnight singing and playing music. We even sent press releases from the parking lot at the border crossing inviting the media and public to join us the next day, July 2, for a press conference and what would be our third attempt at crossing the border. Dozens of news outlets in Canada, the US, Cuba, Venezuela and even Spain covered the standoff at the border. After a very

successful press conference, the third attempt to get that humanitarian aid through the border was made. Within an hour the US border guards finally agreed that all of the aid would be allowed through and on its way to Cuba, including the "controversial" sports equipment.

This was an important victory and great way to kick off the 20th anniversary Caravan; however it was only the beginning of our Caravan to Cuba. It was still another 3 weeks before our feet touched Cuba soil.

### **Travelling thru the United States**

After getting the aid safely across the border, we headed to our first Caravan event in Seattle, Washington. From there, those who had crossed the border along with other Caravanistas who joined from the US, travelled down the west coast in two separate buses as routes "A" and "B" of the Caravan. This year there were 9 Caravan routes that participated in over 100 events in 47 states and 6 Canadian provinces.

I was honoured to be the official route speaker for route "A." We were hosted in Seattle, Bremerton, Olympia, Eugene, Chico, Palo Alto, Oakland, Berkeley, Santa Cruz, Big Sur, San Pedro, Los Angeles, Tucson, El Paso and Austin. The diversity along the route, from the environment we drove past to the people we met each night was amazing. Each night we had a different

*continued on page 24*

event – outdoors, in a church, in a community centre, or in an activist centre. Each night we met new friends, some who have been supporting the Caravan for the last 20 years and many who were attending their first Caravan event.

My favorite part about our travel through the US was meeting new people, especially Cubans or people who have lived in Cuba. First, we met Lois in Bremerton who travelled to Cuba as a missionary in 1949. She lived in Cuba for ten years leading up to the revolution and stayed living there until the 90s. She told us how she had gone to Cuba to recruit people to Christ, but she had been recruited to the revolution and people of Cuba. Second, we met a younger woman in Big Sur, whose family had left Cuba when she was 11. She had bad memories of the Cuban revolution and said that she felt it was criminal that the US government had sent Elian Gonzalez back to Cuba in the 90s, this was the famous case of a young boy whose mother kidnapped him from his father to go to the US by raft. The raft sunk and his mother was killed, Elian, however, was rescued and taken to live with an uncle he had not met before in Miami. Elian's father and the Cuban people and government fought a long battle to have Elian returned home. It was a bit shocking to hear someone say that is how much they disliked Cuba that a son should have to spend a lifetime without his father. Unfortunately she did not stay for our Caravan event so we could discuss these issues further (I also did not know at the time that I would have a chance to meet Elian in Matanzas during the Caravan and see how happy he is to have grown up there with his father). Third, a few days later, at a rest stop, we met two more Cubans living in the United States, Yoel and Jose, they were taking pictures of our buses. We stopped to chat and one of the first things Yoel said was that he was planning a trip back to Cuba for July 26, an important historical date for the Cuban Revolution. He also proclaimed to us, "I am a Fidelista". They were so enthusiastic about the Caravan that they offered to stop with us at the next gas station to buy us diesel. True to their word, they donated \$150 of fuel to the Caravan. This was great gesture of solidarity and is definitely one of my favorite memories of the Caravan.

#### **Getting together in McAllen, Texas**



Clockwise from left: Event in El Paso, Texas; Father Luis Barrios speaks to media in McAllen, Texas; Tamara Hansen and Gail Walker lead chants across US/Mexico border; Caravanistas meet two Cubans living in the US

After Austin all 9 Caravan routes were on the move towards orientation in McAllen, Texas. When Route "A" arrived at the church, there were already 6 brightly painted vehicles packed with humanitarian aid that had arrived. Orientation in McAllen was a chance to meet the over 50 people who had gathered together to support the Caravan, to manifest and pack the aid, cook meals, and discuss plans for the border crossing from the US into Mexico, where we would be breaking US law and openly declaring that we were going to Cuba and taking humanitarian aid with us. People of all ages and abilities leant a hand in the heavy work under the hot Texan sun and at night spent time resting and getting to know one another.

On July 19, it was time for caravanistas to head to the border. We went in two fronts, a driving contingent and a walking contingent. The main group crossed at the Hidalgo bridge with enthusiastic chants calling for the end to the US blockade and travel ban of Cuba, as well as demanding the release of the Cuban Five held in US prisons. The vehicles entered at the Pharr Bridge, where the US authorities detained six computers. However, the rest of the aid, including seven vehicles along with medicine, medical equipment, incubators, an x-ray machine, school supplies, sports equipment and other important items.

#### **Travelling thru Mexico**

When we crossed the border into Reynosa,

Mexico we were greeted by enthusiastic Mexican solidarity organizations. We also had 10 caravanistas joining us from Mexico. We left Reynosa as a line of brightly painted vehicles travelling down the highway. We stopped overnight in Victoria, where everyone got a chance to enjoy some delicious Mexican food and get a good night's sleep. The next morning we were on the buses to Tampico, where we entered the port along with the port workers and spent the afternoon unloading the humanitarian aid from the buses and loading it in to shipping containers. It was a lot of work, but everyone pitched in according to their ability, and we got the job done. We checked in to our hotel for the night, dreaming of our departure to Cuba this next morning.

#### **Our arrival in Cuba**

We landed in Havana and got to walk off the plane directly onto the tarmac. We were greeted by a gauntlet of Cuban journalists and friends from the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP). We went to the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Centre for a dynamic welcoming program. There was speeches, singing, dancing and video. One of the videos that was especially moving was about the friendship between the late Reverend Lucius Walker Jr., the founder and director of IFCO/Pastors for Peace, and Fidel Castro,

the leader of the Cuban revolution. After the event everyone was invited outside for a performance by a live band and dancers on stilts and it was all wrapped up with some delicious Cuban cake.

### Our visits in Cuba

We spent 6 days in Havana and each caravanista was given the choice to visit either Santa Clara or Matanzas for 3 days. The program in Cuba included visits to the Jose Marti Monument in the Plaza of the Revolution, to a Committee for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR), to the House of Africa, to the House of ALBA (the Bolivarian Alternative for Latin America), to the House of Friendship, and to the Jose Marti Anti-Imperialist Tribunal. We also attended a few educational workshops with family members of the Cuban 5, students from the Latin American School of Medicine, experts on Cuba's environmental planning and a director from the Ministry of Foreign Relations. We also visited a hospital, a clinic, and other institutions where they explained how the US blockade negatively impacts their work. We were amazed by some spectacular cultural performances by different Cuban children's groups, the musical group "Cubanos en la Red" and a stunning outdoor concert by a Cuban choir. Our trip also

included free time to explore on our own and a day at the beach. By the end of the 9 day tour, many of

us were ready to stay in Cuba, but our important reverse challenge against the US blockade and travel ban was still to come.

### Our Reverse Challenge

We flew back to Tampico and did a day-long drive up to the US/Mexico border. The reverse challenge is an important part of the Caravan because Americans who have travelled on the trip have broken US laws by travelling to Cuba without a license. A press release from IFCO/Pastors for Peace published after we crossed the border explains our experience, "Caravanistas were chanting "Cuba si! Bloqueo no!" and "We've been to Cuba and we want you to know it!" as they entered US Customs, openly declaring their refusal to seek or accept a license from the US government to travel



Caravanistas load aid in Tampico, Mexico

or bring aid to Cuba. US border authorities demanded the caravanistas provide extensive information about their travel to Cuba, but in a united front, caravanistas refused to comply. "This kind of tactic of forcing people who travel to Cuba to "name names" is pure McCarthyism," said Lisa Valenti, who has participated in all 23 Caravans. "The US government subjects no other country in the world to such draconian travel restrictions. Why? What is the threat of a small island neighbor 90 miles away that offers free health care to the world?" added IFCO Co-Director Gail Walker. "As we made our way through the border we celebrated our important stand against the US blockade against Cuba and all of the events and media coverage that had brought this issue into the minds of people across Canada, the US and Mexico. Once we were all through, we began to say our goodbyes and many committed to be back on the 2013 Caravan to keep challenging the United States inhuman policy towards Cuba in their communities throughout the year.



Clockwise from top left: Meeting with Elian Gonzalez and his father; Dancing with Cuban children; Afro-Cuban dancers in Matanzas; Visiting the Africa House; Touring a clinic for deaf children

# VANCOUVER CELEBRATES THE JULY 26<sup>TH</sup> MOVEMENT: LONG LIVE MONCADA DAY AND THE GAINS OF THE CUBAN REVOLUTION!

*By Janine Solanki*

The Cuban Revolution was alive and present in Vancouver on July 26<sup>th</sup> 2012, as Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba celebrated Moncada Day through reflection, poetry, music and multimedia. This year marked the 59th anniversary of the attack on the Moncada Army Barracks in Santiago de Cuba, led by Fidel Castro on July 26<sup>th</sup> 1953. The attack signaled the beginning of the Cuban Revolution which triumphed 6 years later in 1959, and continues to push forward to a better world today.

Joe's Café in Vancouver was packed with over 70 people, supporters of Cuba and the Cuban Revolution, those interested to learn more, and people from many different ethnic communities, especially the Latin American community. Participants were welcomed to the event by Colleen Glenn, the MC of the evening, President of the Richmond NDP and Executive Committee member of VCSC. To outline the historic events of July 26<sup>th</sup> and it's legacy on the continuing revolutionary movement today, Aaron Mercredi, organizer with VCSC and the Indigenous Rights and Action Project (IRAP) spoke. "Cuba's revolutionary process today is a reflection of the aspirations of those young rebels who attacked the Moncada barracks, for a better Cuba and a better world. Their fighting spirit is alive today through the Cuban 5 who stand strong in defense of Cuba and humanity after almost 14 years in US prisons. It is in the Cuban doctors brigades which have brought hope and health to poor communities the world over. And it is in the Cuban people who today are commemorating the revolutionary heroes of July 26<sup>th</sup>."

The audience experienced a history of

July 26<sup>th</sup> through video footage and clips following moments of July 26<sup>th</sup> from its beginning as a heroic yet failed attack, to a revolutionary movement, to the Cuban Revolution today. Janine Solanki, VCSC organizer and recent brigadista with the Ernesto Che Guevara Volunteer Work Brigade, shared photos of a visit the brigade took to the site of the Moncada attacks, as well as shared an account of the July 26<sup>th</sup> attacks written by Haydee Santamaria, a great Cuban revolutionary who was one of the two women who participated in the attack on Moncada.

Vancouver's July 26<sup>th</sup> celebration connected with Cuba, as VCSC coordinator Tamara Hansen, who was with the Pastors for Peace Caravan to Cuba, shared her experience of the July 26<sup>th</sup> celebrations in Matanzas, Cuba via phone message. Greetings from Cuba were also heard from Esperanza Luzbert, Director of the North American Desk of the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP), who warmly expressed her appreciation towards those supporting Cuba in Vancouver and joining in commemorating July 26<sup>th</sup>.

The evening also featured poetry, with a poem written by Raúl Gómez García, one of the rebels who fought and died in the attack on Moncada. The poem "We are in combat" was originally written the night before the attack, and read to the rebels before they departed for the Moncada Barracks. Eder Delgado, a Venezuelan student living in Vancouver, read the poem in Spanish, which was summarized in English by Gisela Lara, also a Venezuelan living in Vancouver. Gisela also expressed how Cuba's example paved the way for today's



Venezuelan revolution and the deep appreciation Venezuela's revolutionaries have towards Cuba.

The Cuban 5 heroes were present in the hearts and minds of those gathered on this evening, as Max Tenant, VCSC organizer, shared a letter written by the Cuban 5 from US prison in commemoration of July 26<sup>th</sup>. Participants were encouraged to join the fight for the freedom of the Cuban 5, as next month's picket for the Freedom of the Cuban 5 was announced.

A Cuban inspired evening would not be complete without music. Throughout the evening talented local musicians shared their songs of struggle and love. Joaquin Ernesto played inspiring "Trova" music and had the audience singing along to Cuban favorite "Guantanamera." Local Hip Hop artist Joose Justis got people dancing to conscious rhymes and hip hop beats. Yahara Muñoz, a Mexican folk singer, played beautiful and passionate songs from across Latin America.

To bring the event to a close, participants of the event voiced their support of the Cuban Revolution by proclaiming:

¡Viva Cuba!

¡Viva la Revolución!

¡Viva el 26 de Julio!

¡Viva Fidel!

¡Viva Raúl!

¡Venceremos!



# Join the Free the Cuban 5 Peoples' Tribunal & Assembly in Toronto, Canada!

September 21 – 23, 2012



Taken from:

[www.freethethe5peoplestribunal.org](http://www.freethethe5peoplestribunal.org)

**A**lmost 14 years ago, the Cuban Five - René González, Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino and Fernando González - were falsely charged and wrongly convicted in a Miami courtroom of "conspiracy to commit espionage" against the U.S. on behalf of the Cuban government. Ever since the unjust conviction, the five Cubans have been held in separate U.S. prisons, often in solitary confinement.

In fact, the politically-motivated trial and conviction of the Cuban five had nothing to do with threats to U.S. security. The Cuban Five never conspired to commit espionage. They were on a mission to monitor and report on violent groups in Miami that are well known by the U.S. government to be responsible for terrorist acts against the Cuban people.

For more than 50 years, hundreds of attacks have been launched against Cuba by these extreme right-wing groups, whose aim is the violent overthrow of the Cuban government. Their campaign of bombings, assassinations and other attacks has left 3,478 Cubans dead and 2,099 seriously injured.

The Cuban Five were peacefully trying to do what U.S. law enforcement authorities have refused to do - prevent terrorism.

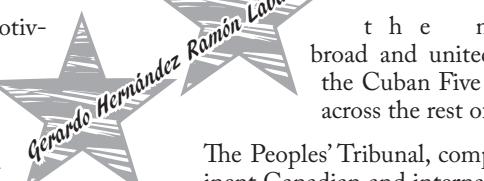
This horrific injustice against the Five has provoked an unprecedented campaign in the U.S., Canada and around the world to demand that their convictions be overturned and that they be granted immediate release.

As part of this international effort to achieve the freedom of the Cuban Five, a number of trade unions and solidarity groups from across Canada, in coordination with the Canadian Network on Cuba and La Table de concertation de solidarité Québec-Cuba, are convoking a Peoples' Tribunal & Assembly on September 21-23, 2012 in To-

ronto, to shed new light on this egregious injustice and to build a broad public campaign to demand their freedom.

The Peoples' Tribunal & Assembly aims:

- to act as a forum for education and for launching an appeal to get justice for the Cuban Five;
- to break the silence of the mainstream media about this case;
- to map out the next steps of a broad and united campaign on the Cuban Five in Québec and across the rest of Canada.



The Peoples' Tribunal, composed of prominent Canadian and international panelists, will hear from expert witnesses before rendering a ruling. Although the Tribunal's ruling will not be legally or judicially binding, it will carry moral force and suasion of the outrage of concerned people across Canada and internationally.

Witnesses will testify to the suffering caused to the Cuban people and to others as a result of all the terrorist attacks against Cuba and Cuban interests. They will testify to the unjust trial in Miami, the U.S. government's covert payments to journalists covering the trial, the horrendous sentences given to the Cuban Five and the violation of international law by the United States government regarding the inhumane treatment they have endured, the denial of visitation rights to family members and the U.S. government's harbouring and protection of self-confessed anti-Cuban terrorists.

The Peoples' Assembly will serve to develop and adopt an extensive plan of action to pressure the Canadian government to join the international demand urging U.S. President Obama to use his authority to immediately release the Cuban Five and allow them to return to their homeland.

**Attending:** Family members of the "Cuban Five" • Livio Di Celmo, Victim of Terror, Montréal, Québec • Danny Glover, Ac-



[WWW.FREETHETHE5PEOPLESSTIBUNAL.ORG](http://WWW.FREETHETHE5PEOPLESSTIBUNAL.ORG)

tor U.S.A. • Gloria La Riva, Free The Five, National Committee - U.S.A. • Cindy Sheehan, AntiWar activist - U.S.A. • Libby Davies, NDP-MP, Vancouver East • Tony Woodley, UNITE the UNION, UK • José Pertierra, Lawyer, Washington, D.C. • Denis Lemelin, National President, Canadian Union of Postal Workers • Marie Clarke Walker, Canadian Labour Congress • Isaac Saney, Professor, Dalhousie University, Halifax • Arnold August, Writer, Montréal, Québec • Raymundo Navarro, Central de Trabajadores de Cuba (CTC) • Julian Rivas, Journalist, Venezuela • Wes Elliott, Grand River Territory • Keith Bolender, Freelance Journalist and Author Based in Toronto • Richard Klugh, Lawyer for the Cuban Five, USA • Ken Neumann, National Director for Canada, United Steelworkers • Stephen Kimber, Professor of Journalism, University of Kings College, Halifax • Alicia Jrapko, International Committee to Free the Cuban Five, U.S.A. • William Sloan, Civil Rights Lawyer, Montréal, Québec •

**Sponsors:** United Food and Commercial Workers • United Steelworkers, Canada • Canadian Union of Postal Workers • Canadian Network on Cuba • International Council of Latin American and Caribbean Women - LATIN@S • The Worker to Worker, Canada-Cuba Labour Solidarity Network • Carranza LLP • Canadian Cuban Friendship Association - Toronto • Latin American and Caribbean Solidarity Network • Canadian Union of Public Employees •

**Endorsers:** International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban Five, USA • National Network on Cuba, U.S.A. • Toronto Forum on Cuba • Communist League/Ligue communiste • International Festival of Poetry of Resistance • Canadian-Cuban Friendship Association of Kingston • Dr. James Cockroft, Montréal, Québec • Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba • Canadian Cuban Friendship Association - Vancouver • Free the Cuban 5 Committee Vancouver • La Asociación de Cubanos Juan Gualberto Gómez • Socialist Action •

# WE NEED TO BREAK THE WALL OF MEDIA SILENCE TO FREE THE CUBAN 5!

*A Fire This Time interview with Heide Trampus,  
Coordinator of the Peoples' Tribunal & Assembly for Justice for the Cuban Five*

*By Tamara Hansen*

On September 21-23 2012, Toronto will host the Peoples' Tribunal & Assembly for Justice for the Cuban Five. The official call-out for this event can be found in this issue of FTT volume 7 issue 5. Recently FTT was able to connect with Heide Trampus, the coordinator of this Peoples' Tribunal & Assembly, via email. This interview will hopefully inspire our great readers to attend this Peoples' Tribunal & Assembly which we believe will be a truly educational and significant accomplishment for the world-wide struggle to free all 5 of our Cuban heroes, and return them from the United States back to their families in Cuba.

**FTT: You are taking the initiative to organize Canada's first Peoples' Tribunal & Assembly for the Cuban 5 in September. Can you explain a bit about the concept of a peoples' tribunal?**

**Heide Trampus:** Returning from Holguin, Cuba where, along with over 400 people



## Breaking the Silence

Peoples' Tribunal & Assembly  
**JUSTICE FOR THE FIVE**  
Toronto City Hall, September 21<sup>st</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2012



from 48 countries, I participated at the VII International Colloquium for "Justice and Freedom for the Cuban Five", and understanding that the direct appeals process for their release was exhausted, it was up to the international community to give a greater voice to the struggle. Since the time of their arrest and unjust imprisonment, solidarity groups, unions and individuals across Canada, including Quebec, have taken up the call for justice. Despite this, the media is keeping silent and most Canadians are not aware of the case.

During our first meeting, the idea of holding a Tribunal instead of a conference was suggested by one of the Planning Committee members and it quickly took shape. The concept, of being able to tell the story through testimonies - witness and victim statements about the arrests of the five men, the unjust trials in Miami, the horrendous long sentences handed down, the violation of human rights by denying visiting visas to family members and the inhumane treatment of the Cuban Five, as well as historical accounts of terrorist attacks on Cuba and the suffering of Cuban and other people - appealed to all of us. Although the ruling will not be legally or judicially binding, the Jury comprised of prominent and well respected people will render a

decision based on the witness/victim testimonials which have been discarded in the U.S. Court system.

**FTT: September 2012 will mark 14 years of imprisonment for the Cuban 5, as you know René González is now out of prison, but the US will not allow him to return to Cuba as they want to keep him on parole for 3 years, given this what is the significance of this tribunal for the Cuban 5 and what would you like to accomplish?**

**Heide Trampus:** René González, although out of prison, is required to remain in the U.S. on probation in Miami, Florida. Other than a one-time visit to Cuba to see his dying brother, he is not free to return to his homeland and to his family. Instead, he is forced to live in a place where his life may be endangered by the same Miami Terrorist groups he tried to expose. Along with the still imprisoned four innocent Cuban men, he is included in our struggle to "Free the Cuban Five" until all are free and justice has been served.

**FTT: As far as I understand this tribunal is truly an international event. Could you elaborate more about some of the most important guests that will be attending this important event?**

**Heide Trampus:** One of our main aims is



Heide Trampus



to break the wall of media silence and with the participation of well-known international guest we hope to get the attention to do just that. To name just some of the participants:

From the U.S., DANNY GLOVER: Well-known U.S. actor, has dedicated himself to be a voice for the "Five" and also visits Gerardo frequently in prison. He makes Life and Video appearances and on one video tells the beautiful story about Gerardo and a bird. SAUL LANDAU: Professor, author, filmmaker, Emmy Award for his film produced with filmmaker Haskell Wexler, *Paul Jacobs and the Nuclear Gang* (1980). His most recent documentary is *Will the Real Terrorist Please Stand Up?* JOSÉ PERTIERRA: Washington lawyer who represents the government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in the case of Luis Posada Carriles' extradition. CINDY SHEEHAN: Mother of specialist Casey Sheehan who was killed in Iraq in 2004. Since that time she has become an internationally known peace and social justice activist. RICHARD KLUGH: Attorney from the legal team of the Cuban Five.

From the U.K., TONY WOODLEY: Executive Officer for Unite the Union, Britain and Ireland's largest trade union with 1.5 million members. Tony is the spokesperson representing all trade unions in Britain (7 million members) campaigning for the Cuban Five and has visited Gerardo in prison three times.

From Cuba, DR. RAYMUNDO NAVARRO FERNANDEZ: Trade union leader, member of the National Secretariat of the Centrale de Trabajadores de Cuba - CTC (the Workers' Central Union of Cuba) and Deputy at the National Assembly of the Peoples' Power (Cuban parliament). ADRIANA PEREZ: Wife of Gerardo Hernández, one of the Cuban Five. She

has not been allowed a visa to visit her husband for 13 years despite repeated attempts. ELIZABETH PALMEIRO: Wife of Ramón Labafino, one of the Cuban Five, who was sentenced to thirty years in prison after his previous life sentence was vacated after an appeal.

From Venezuela, JULIAN RIVAS:

Founder of the Movimiento Quinta República MVR. Former Press Secretary for President Hugo Chavez. Currently Editor for Mundo Del Diario of Caracas.

From Canada, WES ELLIOTT: Native activist and speaker from Six Nations of the Grand River. One of the "Younger Brothers" sitting with the Hodiskeagehda Odekah (those who carry the burden of peace or Men's Fire). STEPHEN KIMBER: Author of one novel and eight books of non-fiction including the best-selling *Flight 111, the tragedy of the Swiss Air crash* and others. He is an award winning writer, journalist and broadcaster. *The real story of the Cuban Five* will be published in the spring of 2013. KEITH BOLANDER: Free-lance journalist and author of *Voices from the Other Side: an Oral History of Terrorism against Cuba*. He has written extensively about

Cuba for more than 20 years. WILLIAM SLOAN: Immigration and Criminal Lawyer from Montreal, Quebec. LIVIO DI CELMO: Brother of victim Fabio Di Celmo a resident of Montreal, who was killed when a bomb set by a U.S. sponsored terrorist exploded in the Copacabana Hotel in Havana.

FTT: Now this is my final question for you, it's a crucial one, what do you think we activists can do to help build this event to be bigger and broader?

**Heide Trampus:** It is very important for all activists to consider participating in this event. Coming together from sea to sea in a large turnout will give the event the prominence and importance we seek in getting media and public attention. Spread the word, disseminate information about the Peoples' Tribunal & Assembly as much and as wide as possible with the webpage: [www.freethe5peoplestrial.org](http://www.freethe5peoplestrial.org) Send your ideas/suggestions regarding developing future action to the organizing committee prior to the event. Attend, if possible the Sunday, September 23 for the afternoon workshops, putting forward ideas and suggestions and assist with the planning/ developing of those ideas for future actions for Justice and Freedom for the Cuban Five.

FTT: Thank you Heide. We look forward to see you in Toronto for the Peoples' Tribunal & Assembly to Free the Cuban 5 in September.



# Struggle to Free the Cuban 5 Heroes Continues to Grow as 14 Years of Imprisonment Approaches

By Noah Fine

## History

A chilling anniversary is quickly approaching. Another chilling reminder of the U.S. governments' disregard for human rights and justice. September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2012 will mark the 14<sup>th</sup> year of the immoral and unjust imprisonment of the Cuban 5 political prisoners.

In 2001, Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González and René González, the Cuban 5, were wrongly accused and convicted in a U.S. Federal Court of "conspiracy to commit espionage" and other fabricated charges. The five were actually unarmed men involved in monitoring Miami-based terrorist organizations, which since 1959 have been responsible for the deaths of over 3,400 people in Cuba, including one resident of Canada, Fabio di Celmo, in 1997.

You would think, that Cuba's response to such terrorist attacks would be considered reasonable by a government who's drowning in a "war on terror" itself no? The Cuban 5 simply investigated and reported on terrorist groups. A war on terror that I imagine could be considered quite cost effective. Not one person lost their life due to the investigative work of the Cuban 5. On the other hand, the U.S. government has plummeted their economy with billions spent on their "war on terror". The U.S. is responsible for the loss of millions of lives in Iraq alone. The U.S. government should take notes and hire the Cuban 5!

*continued from page 9*

*or other resources." (Emphasis added.)*

Given this, the fact that over 130 Indigenous nations and groups whose territory the Northern Gateway pipeline would cross have signed the Save the Fraser Declaration which states, "We will not allow the proposed Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipelines, or similar Tar Sands projects, to cross our lands, territories and watersheds," makes it pretty obvious that the Provincial and Federal governments are premature in their imposition of conditions on a profits from a pipeline which is so broadly opposed by those whose right it is to decide.



But they didn't and they won't. Instead the Cuban 5, considered heroes by peace loving people around the world, especially in Cuba, remain locked up in U.S. prisons as a world-wide movement demanding their freedom continues to grow.

## Vancouver Never Retreats

On Thursday, August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2012, peace-loving people gathered in front of the U.S. Consulate in Vancouver for the 81<sup>st</sup> monthly protest to demand freedom for the Cuban 5. The typically business-as-usual zone in the downtown core filled with loud chants demanding "Hey! Obama! Free the Cuban 5!"

Participants of the protest were able to hear from a number of speakers who explained the history and updates in the case of the Cuban 5. Among the speakers were Sean O'Donoghue, an organizer with the

## Indigenous Rights Comes First: My Land Is Not Your Land

These governments and corporations continue to claim they are "balancing" the economy and the environment when it's clear they are destroying both! The fact that the rights of Indigenous nations have been so consistently and harshly trampled on in the history of Canada is no excuse to continue the pattern today. Indigenous nations have the right to self-determination, which includes the right to make decisions regarding their land and resources. History has shown they have been much more consistent and responsible defenders of a sustainable planet and future than any of the major players in the proposed pipelines. The only effective way to defeat the pipelines is through a broad and active movement which includes not only indigenous nations and environmental organizations, but also poor and working people, and labour unions, who can be informed of the real facts regarding these proposed pipelines. Then we can really build a broad and effective movement to defeat them!

Comité Fabio Di Celmo pour les 5 in Montreal, Quebec who gave greetings by phone to the protest. The committee in Montreal also every month organizes a protest for the Cuban 5. Tamara Hansen, coordinator of Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) who recently returned from Cuba on the Pastors for Peace Caravan to Cuba gave a heartfelt talk about meeting family members of the Cuban 5 while on the Caravan in Cuba. She explained the plight of Adriana Perez, the wife of Cuban 5 hero Gerardo Hernández who has been denied more than 10 requests to visit her husband in prison. A human and legal right afforded to every prisoner in the U.S.

Free the Cuban 5 Committee-Vancouver coordinator, Noah Fine brought the monthly protest to a close reminding participants that the committee is dedicated to return to the U.S. Consulate every single month until all 5 Cuban Heroes are free and in Cuba.

For more information about the Cuban 5 political prisoners or to get involved in the campaign for their freedom, please visit: [www.freethethe5vancouver.ca](http://www.freethethe5vancouver.ca)

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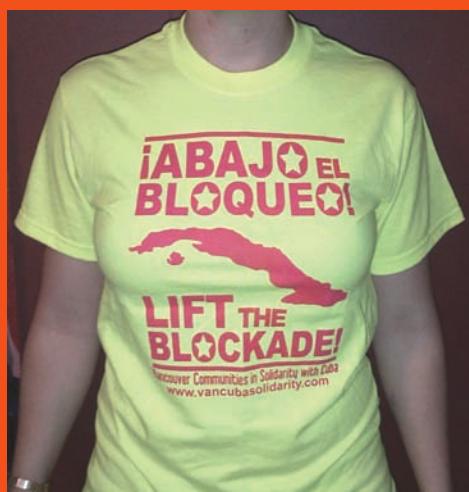


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